ULTIMATE-IDEALS

MARY-TAYLOR-BLAUVELT

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ULTIMATE IDEALS

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BY

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TO

ALL MY PUPILS

OLD AND NEW

" It is manifest that nothing can be of any consequence to mankind, or to any creature, but happiness." Bishop Butler.

" Happiness and reality came through Jesus Christ." John 1 : 17 — translated by Matthew Arnold.

FOREWORD

This little book is the outgrowth of thirteen years of teaching. If it be asked why I have chosen to write upon so trite a subject, I reply that I had taught Bible many years before I had the faintest understanding of what was meant by the expressions, the poor in spirit, the meek, the pure in heart, before I had any comprehension of what it was to inherit the earth, or to see God. Because I think there may be others in like case with myself, I venture to put forth this little book as my attempt to interpret the message of the Divine Teacher in terms of the life of to-day.

Even in this age of war, unrighteousness and unhappiness, it may not be amiss to consider the ideals of peace, righteousness and happiness, given us by that Prince of Peace, who, we yet believe, would in righteousness make war.

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I

THE ULTIMATE IDEAL

It is very difficult in these days for a thinking person to give any detailed account of what he believes concerning God. And yet I am sure that it is an age in which there are more seekers after God, more seekers after truth than ever before. If there is less readiness to believe what is taught than there used to be, that is because the desire for truth is stronger than it used to be. We realize that it is not sufficient to love the Lord our God with all our heart, (the emotional nature), with all our soul, (the æsthetic nature), with all our strength, (the will), but that we must also love Him with all our mind. If the God of our fathers is to be our God, it must not be because we have accepted Him from them, but because we have found Him for ourselves.

For while it is true that we cannot by searching find out God, cannot find out the Almighty unto perfection, it is also true, and we are realizing more and more that it is true, that the whole purpose of our creation is to seek after God, if haply we may feel after Him and find Him.

And doubtless it was meant that this search

after God should go on indefinitely, that the God of one generation should not be the God of the next, that to find Him should be to lose Him. For when the purpose of life is accomplished, when there is nothing more to look forward to, romance ends and life ends. To the race that has fully found its God, further spiritual activity is impossible, it is time for it to become extinct.

But while there can be no ultimate belief, there are certain ideals which to me, at my present stage of thinking, do seem to be ultimate. These ideals, which, although they do not comprise the whole of life,[1] certainly comprise a large part of it, seem to me best expressed by Jesus in the verses knowns as the Beatitudes. From over familiarity these verses have become trite, but lately they have come to me with all the splendor of a new revelation. I see more and more that it was His ability to put such profound truth into a nutshell that made the Carpenter of Nazareth the Son of God, that to Him far more than to Aristotle belongs the title, "Master of those that know."

For Jesus did not think, He knew. He was not the thinker, He was the seer. He who sees has no need to think. But to me, as a result of long thinking, has come a little understanding of that which He knew. And because when old things become new, they are surrounded with a

[1] Notably the æsthetic ideals are omitted.

glory and a tenderness, such as the absolutely new can never have, I have ventured to write on what may seem to be a worn out theme, in the hope that I may make what has become new to me, new to some one else. But chiefly I write, as I think every writer does, to clarify my own thought. For it is only after we have expressed a thing clearly that we really understand it.

Whether the passage commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount was spoken all at one time or not, it certainly is the moral, or rather the spiritual law of the kingdom of God, occupying the same place in the New Testament Kingdom of God, as the law, reputed to have been given from Sinai, occupies in the Old Testament Kingdom of God. And if it was not spoken all at one time, the author of the first Gospel has put it together so artistically, that it might have been so spoken. Regarded as a single discourse, it analyzes easily, and Jesus might almost like the modern clergyman, have taken a text. And if He had done so, I think it would have been those words of His to the Samaritan woman, "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Indeed, these words might almost be said to comprise His whole message to man. For it was the mission of Jesus to make a religion, which had become little more than conventional, spiritual. "Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye can in no

wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven!" How is our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? In that it is in spirit and in truth!

Following out the idea that the whole passage is the spiritual law of the kingdom, the first nine verses, commonly known as the Beatitudes, may be considered as describing the citizens of the kingdom, their duties and their rights.

And who are the citizens of the kingdom? Why, the poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers.

And what are their duties as citizens? Why, to be poor in spirit, to learn the lesson that mourning teaches, to hunger and thirst after righteousness, to be merciful, to be pure in heart, to be peacemakers.

That is, their duty consists not in performing certain actions, but in having a certain spirit. Actions are valuable, only as they tend to produce, or are manifestations of this spirit. For the outward form that the worship of Him who is Spirit takes, does not much matter; the only important thing is that it should be in spirit and in truth.

And what are the rights of the citizens of the kingdom? They may all be summed up in one, blessedness, happiness. Happy are the poor in spirit, happy are they that mourn, happy are the

meek, happy are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, happy are the pure in heart, happy are the merciful, happy are the peacemakers.

And the end of each Beatitude gives us an idea of what Jesus' conception of happiness was. Happiness is to possess the kingdom of Heaven, to be comforted, to inherit the earth, to be filled with righteousness, to see God, to be called the children of God. It is not what happens to us, but what happens in us, that makes us happy. Happiness, like the kingdom of Heaven, is within us. Happiness is the kingdom of Heaven, the Kingdom of Heaven is Happiness.

For the end of the kingdom, its purpose and its only purpose, is happiness. Jesus knew that it is not only the right, but the duty of every man to pursue happiness. He came to teach us how to pursue it. There is only one ultimate ideal, and that is happiness. Not even righteousness, but happiness. Righteousness is the path, but happiness is the goal. For our goal, the place to which we journey, is His presence; and in that presence is fullness of joy, at His right hand is happiness forevermore.

For we were created for joy, not for sorrow; if weeping endures for a night, it is only that joy may come in the morning. Only in joy can the soul fulfil itself, fulfil the Creator's thought of it, be worthy of the Creator and of creation.

In the moments in which we realize our citizen-

ship, we recognize this. For then we know what happiness is, and we understand that it does not spring from outward things, but from such a conception of life, as leads to a gladsome enlightened acceptance of whatever our particular lives may bring, a serene energy in which we rejoice both to do and to be. In such moments we cry, "Thy will be done," not in gloomy submission, but in rapturous adoration, for we have at least had a glimpse of what that good and perfect will of God is. Sacrifice is no longer for us a means of sanctification, for we are already sanctified, have already entered into the inheritance of them that are sanctified. Therefore, for us, there is no more sacrifice. We know that we can only renounce joy for the sake of some higher joy, and that is joy beyond joy.

So when we fast, we no longer have to be told not to be as the hypocrites are, of a sad countenance; instinctively we anoint our heads, and wash our faces, that our outer selves may correspond to our inner selves, may radiate the joy that has taken possesion of, and fills our inmost souls. Our Father who seeth in secret has already rewarded us. He has given us of His joy, has made us one with Himself. And He has rewarded us openly, for this joy shines out upon all with whom we come into contact, until they too become sharers in it.

For men help each other by their joy, not by their sorrow. Hence it is that the first duty of

the soul is to be as happy as possible, for thus only can it be complete, thus only can it enter into its inheritance, the kingdom of Heaven. Thus only can it come under the ultimate angel's law, where

"Law, Life, Joy, Impulse, are one thing!"

"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly!" And of what does life consist save of constant rejoicing of soul, that rapture from which springs life, and ever more life? For that wonderful trinity, love, joy and life, which are not three but one, can continue to exist only as they find expression, and they find expression only in creation. Joy and only joy is creative, for while it is true that great suffering generally precedes creation (travail always means pain), not until sorrow has been turned into joy, does it become creative. Or rather the creative process always turns sorrow into joy, without joy has nothing ever been created.

The prophets of India knew that when they wrote, "From joy does spring all this creation, by joy is it maintained, toward joy does it progress, and into joy does it enter." And again, "Creation is the form that His joy doth take." And the prophets of Israel knew it when they sang, "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice oh, ye righteous; shout for joy all ye that are upright in heart," "Oh, Eternal, happy is the man that

putteth His trust in Thee," for "All Thy ways are pleasantness and all Thy paths are peace!"

But in Jesus' day, as Matthew Arnold points out, Israel had somehow lost the peace, the joy of which her prophets had written so much; therefore it was the mission of Him whom we call the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief, to restore it unto them. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full."

But why had Israel lost her joy, why had her teachers become whited sepulchers, mere receptacles for dead men's bones? Because their righteousness had ceased to be creative, and had become formal and traditional. Because they themselves had ceased to be real! Jesus came to do away with formalism, to make men real, for thus only could they be happy! Happiness and reality came through Jesus Christ.

"Sir," said the Samaritan woman, "I perceive that thou art a prophet," and then she began to ask him the most important question that she could think of to ask a prophet, "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain, and ye say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship!" It is as though we to-day, brought face to face with a prophet of God, could think of nothing more important to ask about than the cut of a surplice!

True, this was an ignorant woman, and a Samaritan, but in spiritual conceptions the

scribes and the Pharisees had not advanced much beyond her; their spiritual life, too, consisted mainly of outward observances. And no outward observances, even of things which God had really commanded, or which the experience of the ages had taught were God's laws, could bring peace and joy; much less such fantastic devices as they had invented for themselves. The heart was wrong. "The things which come from within a man's heart, they it is which defile the man." The keeping of the commandments, the keeping of a man's whole soul, through which he enters into life, could not consist in outward observances! God is a Spirit, and we come into His presence, the presence in which is always fullness of joy, only as we worship Him in spirit and in truth!

For thus only can we be real, thus only can we fulfil ourselves, thus only can we enter into the joy of our Lord! For Jesus' joy consisted in the fact that He was real, that in Him was no sham whatsoever. He was Himself, He fulfilled Himself. Outwardly and inwardly He was Himself, He was what God meant Him to be. His peace, His joy, consisted in the fact that He had attained the hardest thing of all to obtain, perfect truth, perfect sincerity, perfect self-knowledge, perfect self-fulfilment. He was real; happiness and reality came through Jesus Christ.

But we are not happy, because we are not real, because we are not ourselves! From babyhood there has been so much formalism, so much con-

ventionality in our words, in our actions, in what we have been pleased to call our thoughts, that we have lost ourselves, and cannot find ourselves. Indeed if we should meet our true selves, we would perhaps hardly know them.

"For we have been on many thousand lines,
And we have shown, on each, spirit and power;
But hardly have we, for one little hour,
Been on our own lines, have we been ourselves."

But if we would be happy, if we would have the joy of Jesus fulfilled in ourselves, we must know ourselves and be ourselves, we must come to ourselves, we must be our real selves, as He was His real self. We must die to our apparent selves, we must live to our real selves.

And the inner and the outer self must be perfectly harmonious; the outer self must be a perfect expression of the inner self, and the inner self must be worthy of perfect expression, thus only can we be at peace with ourselves.

For we should never be satisfied with ourselves until we do what is right, not because it is our duty, but because we want to do it, because we enjoy doing it. So long as we act from a sense of duty, so long as sacrifice is conscious, the joy that springs from right action is partly self-conceit, and therefore vicious. But to him whose heart is right, all sense of duty vanishes, for him duty has ceased to exist, he simply enjoys himself, his joy is full, he is made perfect in joy. For

what is happiness save perfect expression of a self worth expressing? The man who has attained to this is at one with himself, the higher self having completely triumphed over the lower, at one with the Father, whose ideal for him, he has fulfilled.

This is the ultimate ideal, all other ideals are but the path that leads to it. It may be that we shall never wholly reach it. As Schlegel says of Plato's Republic, it is an archetype laid up in Heaven for the instruction of the philosopher, but it is at least to be "asymptotically approached." That is, as the curve constantly approaches its asymptote, although it never reaches it until it gets out of space into infinity, so we should approach our asymptote, reality and the happiness that comes with it, although we may never reach it until we get out of Time into Eternity.

II

THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Nothing is more curious than the way in which we repeat certain phrases from earliest childhood, without the faintest understanding of them, and furthermore without the faintest suspicion that we do not understand. Such was my experience with the expression "the poor in spirit." I did not know what it meant, nor had I the slightest idea that I did not know, until in my senior year in college, a professor of philosophy startled me by asking me to define it. For the first time I realized that this was something that I had never thought about, and, furthermore, that it was something that it would be well to think about.

On the spur of the moment, I decided that the words were a curious roundabout way of saying "the humble"; that just as the poor in material things are those who feel their need of material things, and desire them intensely, so the poor in spirit are those who feel their need of spiritual things, and desire them intensely. This made the blessing promised, the kingdom of Heaven, not only very appropriate, but even a matter of

course. For it is impossible to desire spiritual blessings intensely, and not obtain them; if we really want the Kingdom of Heaven above all things else, we shall certainly have it. "If with all your hearts ye seek Me, ye shall surely find Me."

But this makes the first beautitude differ little in meaning from the fourth, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." I remember, too, that St. Luke represents Jesus as saying, "Blessed are the poor." Does not St. Matthew give us simply another and more complete version of this, a more understanding version? Should not this beatitude be interpreted "Blessed are they who, whether they possess or do not possess worldly wealth, are at least in spirit poor; they who, if riches increase, set not their hearts upon them; they who, if riches decrease, set not their hearts upon them. For their object is to lay up treasure not on earth, but in Heaven. And so their reward is that upon which they have set their hearts, the Kingdom of Heaven. For what is the kingdom of Heaven? "The kingdom of Heaven is not meat and drink," not the meat and drink, upon which they have not set their hearts, "but righteousness, peace, joy in the Holy Spirit," the things upon which they have set their hearts. The kingdom of Heaven is within us, and that is the reason that they who have set their hearts upon outward things are not able to find it.

Some time ago I heard a man condemn this as a soft and sentimental age, an age that was too lenient to the sinner, and had too little consideration for the respectable member of society. I could not help thinking that if this were indeed true, it might mean that we are beginning to understand the mind of Christ, to have that mind within us which was also in Him. For Jesus seems to have had nothing but compassion for the obvious sins, that bring their own punishment with them, the outcast was always His friend. Was it not that He felt that such sins had their place in the Divine plan for human development? For upon the one hand, they teach men their insufficiency and weakness, and thus throw them back upon God, while on the other hand, they teach them to make allowance for their neighbor, to forgive and to love.

For what is human development, human perfection, save getting closer to God, getting closer to man, understanding God better, understanding man better, loving God better, loving man better? For such development it may be that such sin is necessary; it is possible that we can no more be made perfect without sin, than we can be made perfect without suffering. Is it because of this that there is more joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance? It is gentleness that makes us great, and after all does not gentleness imply a certain

weakness, at least sufficient weakness to understand the weak?

On the other hand, the vices of the mind, the respectable sins, avarice and hypocrisy, which in this life ordinarily bring not punishment but prosperity, are as much worse than the vices of the body as the mind is above the body, for they are the sins which in their very nature tend to separate us from God and man. Ye cannot serve God and mammon, ye cannot love God and mammon, ye cannot serve man and mammon, ye cannot love man and mammon.

For the excessive love of money not only extinguishes all divine ideals within a man, it also dulls all human interests. To the mere money-maker, men become nothing but raw material, out of which he can make more money. And when he has made his money, he frequently does not know how to use it so as to enrich even his own nature, or give charm to his life. His pleasures, if he has any apart from money-making, are often costly but not ennobling, his home expensive but not refined, while his family are often averse to effort, living only for excitement, and helpless without it. If he is hospitable, his hospitality often springs more from love of ostentation, than from love of his friend, and enriches neither him that gives nor him that takes. There is no poetry in his life, for poetry is in its essence the discerning of beauty. And there is no room in the heart of the mere money maker for the

strange and wistful longing which beautiful things arouse, for the rapturous emotion evoked by beauty.

To such a man there are no moods of soul-delight, for there is no soul to be delighted. For what is the soul save the power to see the beauty in things, the power to see it where it is obvious, and the power to see it where it is not always obvious, in all the lives about us? "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" In the multitude of his possessions, he has lost the power to become a son of God.

Even if he be the possessor of beautiful things, it is often not the sense of their beauty that thrills him, but the fact of his possession. He may enjoy his own beautiful gardens, but not those of his neighbors, still less the public parks, or the wild beauty of Nature. For a thing must be his exclusively, before he can enjoy it, and thus his possessions form a high wall about him, cutting him off not only from his fellows, but from all other beautiful things. Thus in order that he may possess a few things, he has given up everything. He lives, or rather is buried alive, in the little world of his own possessions, while the poor in spirit may claim the whole world that God has made as his own. Nay, he may live not only in this world, but in a thousand worlds, for all things are his, not only the things that he possesses, but also the things that he enjoys, not

only the things that he experiences, but even the things that he imagines.

I was once present at a party, which a friend of mine gave to some pauper blind children. One little lad, greatly excited, wanted to feel of everything in the room, and to know to whom each belonged. When in answer to his questions I said, "It belongs to Mrs. W——, everything here belongs to Mrs. W——," he put his hand on my cheek, and with a beatific smile exclaimed, "Oh, no! you made a mistake! it is all mine for today!" That is the way it is with the poor in spirit: everything that he can enjoy is his for today, and which is ours for today is ours forever.

> "What entered into thee,
> That was, is, and shall be!"

"How hardly shall they that trust in riches enter into the kingdom of God!" For the kingdom of God is the kingdom of love, the kingdom of understanding, the kingdom of the ideal, the kingdom of the beautiful! And into that kingdom none but the poor in spirit may enter.

But we must remember that it is the poor in spirit that are blessed, and these are not necessarily the poor in this world's goods. There is no blessing in either riches or poverty, considered by themselves, nor is there necessarily any curse in either. There are times when having seen the vulgar materialism, the disgusting animalism, of

certain rich people, we have a tendency to idealize the poor. But a closer view shows us that there is often quite as much materialism in the life of the poor, as in that of the rich. Poverty, like sorrow, is frequently a blessing, because it brings men nearer to each other, helps them to recognize each other's human hearts. Poverty, too, sometimes demands and cries out for faith in God. Those in comfortable circumstances were not eager to come to the marriage of the king's son; they had too many interests of their own. The blind, the poor, the halt and the maimed, having no such interests, were glad to come. In Tolstoi's "War and Peace," it was not until Peter, the richest man in Russia, had been taken prisoner and deprived of everything, that he could look upon the woods and the fields, and beyond to the limitless horizon, and exclaim, "All that is mine! All that is in me! and that is what they think they have taken prisoner!"

Yet it is doubtful whether Peter would have felt this, if he had always been poor. We know that, for the very poor, life is often reduced to, "What shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and wherewithal shall we be clothed?" and that this struggle, so far from throwing the soul back upon God and the neighbor, frequently leaves no room in the life for either God or the neighbor, no power to appreciate the beauty of either earth, or sea or sky. Is it not the ultimate tragedy of the slums, that, under slum conditions, one can

scarcely, from birth to death, think of anything but the body? Existence becomes merely animal, men work in order to get food to keep the body alive, in order to do more work, to get more food, to keep the body alive, and so on in an endless chain.

Nor, and perhaps this is the greatest curse of all, is there any pleasure in the work, for it is of too monotonous a nature; it affords no opportunity for either self-expression or self-development. Consequently there is no self to be expressed, no self to be developed; man ceases to be man, and becomes a mere animal. The only pleasures that can be enjoyed are physical pleasures, and of the physical pleasures those that are most degrading are often most enjoyed. Some time ago I saw a letter from an educated man who had gone to work as a common laborer, in order that he might study the conditions, under which so many of his fellows had to live. He boarded in a house with other laborers, and he testified that ninety per cent of his house-mates got drunk once a week, and that as they sat at table it was unusual for five minutes to pass without an obscene jest.

And then there is a certain grace, finish, polish and pervasive charm, which people cannot easily acquire, except by a certain amount of leisure from drudgery and scrambling cares. We may say that this is not essential, and perhaps does not even matter very much, but in our inmost

hearts we know that it does matter; that it is this beauty of perception and proportion that attracts us, as nothing else does. The other day I read a story, in which the wife of the principal character experiences the shock of discovering that her husband had made money by questionable means. When she reproaches him with it, he replies, "You know very well that you would not have looked at me if I had always been poor. I grant that you can get along without the things that money buys, but you wanted the kind of man that it takes a certain amount of money to make."

Yes, it may be a sad truth, but it is a truth. Most of us, if we are high-minded, can get along without the things that money buys, but we demand as our friends the kind of men and women that it usually takes a certain amount of money to make. Of course we have all known simple country people who, by their natural kindliness and sympathy on the one hand, and acute observation on the other, have won their way to our hearts. We have felt that this natural essential culture was much better than any acquired culture. But the one does not necessarily exclude the other, and there is no denying the fact that the acquired culture greatly enhances the value of the natural culture, that the educated man, who works out far-reaching problems, is of more worth to the world, than the mere hewer of wood and drawer of water.

Moreover it is just the temperament that, under

favorable circumstances, might have been artistic and contributed something of permanent beauty to the world, that is most likely to break down under monotonous toil in an uncongenial environment. It is a mistake to comfort ourselves with the thought that real genius will always conquer circumstances; it will not. No doubt there have been many mute, inglorious Miltons. Many a struggling genius has prayed Sidney Lanier's prayer, "Only bread, dear Lord, not my will, but Thy decree, and then leisure to write my poems," and the prayer has not been answered, the world has been deprived of the poems.

I know of no sadder passage in all literature than one to be found in Zangwill's story, "The Master." The hero, the son of a poor, ignorant family, has become a world-renowned painter, and has fallen in love with a beautiful woman, made more beautiful by all that money can buy. And then "the thought of his mother came up from dim recesses of memory, and he was jealous of Eleanor for her sake, jealous of her beauty, her breeding, her wealth; jealous of all that made her different from his mother, of all that made her life fuller, freer, higher, richer,— of all, in fine, that made him love her." For it had suddenly dawned upon him that, after all, his wretched mother had the same temperament that Eleanor had, only circumstances had brought out all that was lovely in Eleanor, all that was unlovely in his mother.

And then in these days most men and women have to depend, not only upon their own labor for their daily bread, but upon another man's will for a chance to labor, and doubtless this often means great curtailment of freedom of thought and speech, and of the development that comes with such freedom. "The only time a fellow like me can have an opinion," a laboring man was heard to remark, "is when he is in bed." The other day I heard of the principal of a school of whom it was said, "She would have had the highest possible ideals if only she had had a proper financial backing." It is to be feared that there are many people similarly placed.

When we consider all these things, we come to see, that so far from exalting poverty, it is right that the great end of civilization for this generation should be, as it is coming more and more to be, to abolish poverty, to do away not only with debasing and degrading conditions, but also to set men free from hopeless drudgery, to provide a certain amount of leisure and beauty for all, together with the training that is necessary for a proper appreciation of leisure and beauty. It is right that he who will not labor should not eat, but it is a disgrace to our civilization that he who is willing to labor should not have the chance to do so, and that he who does labor should often have the chance to eat so little. Such a man is entitled not only to corn and house room, but to what Emerson calls Athenian corn, and

Roman house room, and we who do have these things should never be quite happy in our possession of them, until all can share them with us.

But if neither wealth nor poverty in itself brings salvation, neither is there any salvation in middle-classness. I used to think the prayer of Agur, "Give me neither poverty nor riches," quite ideal, and for myself it is still what I want. But as a matter of fact when one lives in a community composed entirely of middle-class people, one finds their lives no more ideal than those of the very poor, or those of the very rich. I will grant that, as a class, there is probably a higher average of respectability among them, than is to be found among either the rich or the poor. They have less tendency to physical vice, but I am inclined to think that, except as the middle class includes professional people, there is less aspiration, less lifting up of the heart among them, than there is among either rich or poor.

For the God of the middle-class is too often respectability, and having attained that, there is no more to be desired. They have fewer vices than either the rich or the poor, but on the other hand, there is frequently a smugness and self-satisfaction among them, due to the fact that their virtue is chiefly negative. And with this smugness there is often associated a certain pretentiousness and artificiality. It seems as though they had lost the naturalness and simplicity of the lower classes, without gaining the naturalness and sim-

plicity of the upper classes. Since such people have so little in the way of positive virtue, it would be almost a relief to find more positive vice among them. "I would that thou wert cold or hot." One is never enthusiastic about them, never animated with a desire to be like them, for they are not themselves enthusiastic, and their virtue, while it may be orderly, is not beautiful, and their culture, like their goodness, is secondhand and conventional, and therefore uninspiring.

The difficulty with them is that they lack ambition; instead of struggling after more victory, they are content to sit down and enjoy the petty victories of the past. They are not "pressing forward to the things that are before," for they seem to interpret St. Paul's words "I have learned in whatsoever state I am therewith to be content," as applying not only to the material state, but also to the intellectual and spiritual state. And they are content with their present stage not only as a stage, but as an end, and to be content with anything as an end is death. They are what a friend of mine called "too damned happy." And the adjective was perfectly correct, for he who is absolutely content with himself and his surroundings is damned, damned or condemned not to grow.

For human nature inspires only as it aspires, turning its back upon every success attained, to pursue another higher and better still. When the crown falls upon one victory, it should only en-

courage us for the harder tug still to come. We gain one height, only that we may obtain a better view of the height that lies above it, and of the path by which we may ascend to it.

After all, does not the very expression "a dead level" imply that any level is deadening? Variety is the spice of life, and I believe that for life to be sufficiently interesting we need this variety, not only in temperament, character and abilities, but also in material possessions. Even in William Morris' ideal commonwealth, where everybody could have everything that he wanted, some people lived in big houses, and some people lived in little houses, because they preferred them. I prefer the little house for myself because it best expresses me, but I enjoy visiting in the big houses of some of my friends. And within certain limits the stately homes of England and America have their place,[1] are a real addition to the spiritual life of the nation, especially when, as is more and more becoming the case, they are more or less open to the public. There is room for the beauty of Nature which is, or should be, free to all, but there is also room for the beauty of Art, which is sometimes very expensive.

[1] Of course I do not mean in any sense to indorse what Ruskin describes as "that curious laying out of ground, that beautiful arrangement of dwelling-house for man and beast, by which we have grouse and blackcock, so many brace to the acre, and men and women — so many brace to the garret."

What then should be our attitude toward wealth? The mediæval saints seem to have taken the same position toward material possessions, that they took toward the human body; they regarded both as impure and unholy things, and thought it the duty of the Christian to despise them. But the body is not an impure and unholy thing, it is the temple of the living God, and neither is wealth in itself an unholy thing. It is true that temptations come to us from the world and from the flesh as well as from the devil, but the world and the flesh are not in themselves the devil, and to think of them as such is simply to blaspheme against the God who made them, as the highest manifestation of Himself.

No, a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things that he possesseth, any more than a man's life consisteth in bodily strength. A man's life consisteth in the full and free exercise of his faculties. But for the full and free exercise of the faculties a certain amount of physical strength, and generally a certain amount of worldly wealth is necessary, and he who fails to do what he can to obtain both the health and the possessions, necessary to the full exercise of his God-given powers, is not only not praiseworthy, but even criminal.

It is true that some of the loveliest and most useful persons that the world has ever seen have been among those who, having found it impossible to obtain physical health, have accepted that fact,

and have found even better self-expression in sickness than in health. And so the absolutely loveliest and most useful persons that the world has ever known have been those who, like Jesus and St. Francis, have recognized that their own peculiar genius could find its best expression in poverty, and so have deliberately chosen it. And not very far below this class have been some who, having found poverty inevitable, have accepted it cheerfully.

But when the physical or material state in which we happen to be seems to us to be such as to interfere with our best development, our best expression, our best service, we should not be content to remain in it, if it is possible to change it. Of course if we cannot change it, then we must believe that the development and service that seem to us to be best, are not really best and be satisfied " not to serve God more, which meaneth otherwise, than as God please."

And just as there are times in our lives when we may have to concentrate our energies upon obtaining physical health, so there are times in our lives when some of us may have to concentrate our energies upon obtaining material wealth; only both should be regarded as means, and not ends. We sometimes hear a mother say " I am much more interested just now in my child's physical development than I am in his intellectual progress." And she may be quite right in feeling as she does. Dollars are more important than pen-

nies, yet there is truth in the saying "Take care of the pennies, and the dollars will take care of themselves." So the intellectual and the spiritual are more important than the physical and material, but it is sometimes true of some people that if they can be made to take care of the physical and material, the intellectual and spiritual will take care of themselves.

No, a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth. But while life is not made up of things, life does use things; and it is not right wholly to ignore this fact. Wealth ministers directly to the body, but the body, rightly used, ministers to the spirit, and it is right for us to want and to try to get as much wealth as is necessary, to make our particular bodies minister, in the best way, to our particular spirits. If the bread that we eat, the pleasures that we enjoy, become not only animal strength and animal spirit, but courage, endurance, thought, imagination and love, then we have a right to just as much bread, to just as much pleasure as can be so transmuted. Whatever we can honestly have that helps us, comforts us, enables us to do our work better, enables us to love more, we have a right to have.

I once heard a man ask William Morris whether he honestly thought that a chimney-sweep should be paid as much as a university professor. Morris replied, somewhat sarcastically, "If in order to do his work properly, the professor needs to

eat more than the chimney-sweep, then he should be paid more." If by eating he meant, as Mr. Tulliver would say, "not exactly eating, but all that that signifies," the answer was a correct one. We are taught to pray "Give us this day our daily bread," and it is right that we should have our daily bread, and enjoy it. "Man does not live by bread alone," but man cannot live without bread; so it is right that he should both pray for it and work for it. Only the mind and heart should be set chiefly on work and love, not on bread.

It is sometimes assumed that Jesus meant that all men should be poor, but a close reading of the Gospel story does not lead to this conclusion. He Himself was not an ascetic. He came eating and drinking, and they said "Behold a gluttonous man, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners." He prayed not that His disciples should be taken out of the world, but that they should be kept from the evil that is in the world. For, as Phillips Brooks has so well put it, He did not believe that perfection could be realized by "cutting off everything which by completing life should confuse it;" it is not so easy and simple as that. He had friends among both the rich and the poor, for He was a partisan of neither wealth nor poverty. Neither was good nor bad in itself, either was good as it made the man good, bad as it made the man bad.

If He chose the life of a poor man for Himself,

it was because His own particular nature, His own particular genius found its best expression in poverty. Other men's natures, other men's geniuses, might find their best expression in wealth, and He had no quarrel with them. It is true that, when He sent His disciples out to teach and to preach, He told them that they were not to take two coats, but that was because unnecessary luggage would impede them in their mission, not because there is anything wrong in having two coats. That is the test whether wealth is right for us, will it help us or hinder us in our mission? We are put here to work out our own salvation, but what is salvation for you is not necessarily salvation for me, and therefore the ways by which you find salvation may differ, and rightly differ, from the ways by which I find it.

It is sometimes said that Jesus taught that we should sell all that we have and give to the poor, but that also is not true. He told one young man to do that, but that, I think, was because for that particular young man, He had a plan of life with which wealth would have interfered. Jesus "beholding him, loved him," and wanted him for an apostle, and in the apostle's life great possessions would not help, but hinder. It seems to me that it is probable that all through his ministry, Jesus felt the need of one apostle with a little broader culture than the others, to do the work which St. Paul was afterwards called upon to do. When He saw this man He was drawn

toward him; he felt that he was perhaps the man whom He was seeking, and so He offered him the greatest opportunity which was ever offered to any man since the world began, an opportunity perhaps to fill the places of St. Paul and St. John combined, and the young man refused, because he had great possessions. For if possessions sometimes help us to self-realization, they are just as likely to prevent self-realization, and this is the saddest instance on record of their having done so.

What then is the conclusion of the whole matter? "A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesseth." No. A man's life consisteth in the full and free exercise of his faculties. It is right that we should have food and drink, but we are here to satisfy needs that are more to us than food and drink, we are here to find ourselves, to find our own souls, the soul that is greater than what we have, than what we do, or even than what we think. And that is another way of saying that we are here to find God in our souls, to glorify the God who is within us, and to prepare to enjoy Him forever. It is right and even our duty to do what we can to provide the worldly goods that are necessary for that full and free exercise of our faculties, which is essential if we would find ourselves, and having done that, to think no more about material things.

Some men, and these are often of the highest type, have faculties for whose development very little, in the way of worldly possessions, is needed.

Others have faculties for whose proper development more is required. Some authors have written better when surrounded by beautiful things, others have preferred to write in perfectly bare rooms; that is, some have found beautiful surroundings an inspiration, others have found them a distraction. It is our right to labor for whatever we find inspiring, our duty to banish from our lives whatever proves distracting.

But not only is it right that every man should labor for whatever wealth is necessary for the exercise of his faculties, but there are those whose faculties are such, that it is impossible to exercise them fully and freely without getting rich, and even perhaps very rich. If such men realize the immorality of seeking to acquire wealth by winning it from others, rather than by earning it by service to their fellowmen, if by enriching themselves they enrich others also, then they may be among the most useful members of society.

Great captains of industry are as necessary as great rulers, but they are no more entitled to all the profits of the industry which they control, than rulers are to all the wealth of the nation which they rule. But if the object of their lives is to make gold and silver as common stones, not in their own palaces, but in Jerusalem, if incidentally the precious metals abound in their own palaces also, there is no fault to be found with them.

It is even right that they should enjoy the sensation of making money. Every one enjoys the

sensation of exercising his faculties successfully. But the business man, the chief object of whose life is money, is on a par with the clergyman, the chief object of whose life is popularity. To a certain extent the clergyman has a right to enjoy his popularity, but only as it comes as a by-product of service. So the business man has a right to enjoy getting rich, but only when it comes as a by-product of service. And when wealth has not been created by its owner but inherited, then the responsibility is even greater. Such a man is in the position of a servant who has been paid in advance, therefore failure on his part to serve is especially disgraceful. And whatever we have, no matter how obtained, is ours, not to keep, but to share. Even the child that we create is not our own, it must be given to the world.

III

THEY THAT MOURN

"Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted!" Yes, happy are they that mourn, for true happiness, the goal of life, can never be reached except through mourning. No one who has really mourned and been comforted ever doubts this. He knows that now for the first time, he is truly happy; what he called happiness before was merely light-heartedness. "Life," my old Oxford teacher, York Powell used to say, "would be a poor, thin thing without sorrow."

"Man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Suffering is our birthright as human beings, and I believe that there is no one who would willingly give up this birthright, for it is only through suffering that we become great, enter into fellowship with man and God, and so go on unto perfection. Was not Jesus the perfect man, that is, the man whose fellowship with man and God was perfect, because He was the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief? Therefore, we do well to pray with St. Paul that we may know the fellowship of His suffering. To suffering are we called, and we none of us want to miss our calling.

Even little children feel the need of sorrow in life, for have you never noticed how many of them love sad stories? Is not this because even they have it dimly in mind that life is not complete without suffering? So until sorrow has come to them in life they must have it in books. For however much we may dread the sad experiences of life, we none of us want to miss the blessing promised to those who mourn. And we all bear testimony to the fact that there can be no real joy without suffering, for when we ourselves are in sorrow and want comfort, we never turn to those who are happy as we once were happy, but only to those who have had great sorrow, and whose sorrow has been turned into joy, has shed such light upon their souls that they are able to shed light upon other souls.

"How sad," we sometimes say, "to see the lines of suffering come upon a young face!" Yes, but how much sadder it is when these lines never come! "Shall our pity," says Maeterlinck, "go forth to him who at times will weep on the shore of an infinite sea, or to the other who smiles all his life without cause alone in his little room?" Yes, it is better to weep on the Mount of Transfiguration in the company of apostles and prophets, in the company of Emanuel Himself, than to smile alone in the valley.

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord!" That is the comfort, still to be able to say "Blessed be the

name of the Lord"; to realize that what we loved has been taken from us only because something better was in store for us, that our angels have left us only that archangels may come. To have proved, too, the strength of our own souls, for now that we know that the soul is strong enough to bear and to bless, we can face the future without fear. Yes, it pays even to have had to cry out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me!" just to prove that it is not true, that our God has not forsaken us. For it is only as we have uttered that cry, that we know certainly that it is not true, that our God can never forsake us. Having descended into hell, and found that He is there, we know that He is everywhere.

"These things," so the King James' version makes Jesus say, "are the beginning of sorrow." The Revised Version reads, "These things are the beginning of travail." And can there be any satisfying explanation of sorrow save that it is the birth-pangs of the spiritual life; what possible justification of pain can there be save that from it new life is born? But it rests with us to determine whether the new life shall be born, whether our sorrow shall remain sorrow, whether it shall become nothing but pettiness and littleness, separating us from man and God, or whether it shall be transformed into the joy from whence new life is born, fuller life for ourselves and for all those about us.

And when we have succeeded in transforming our

sorrow into joy, then we see how perfectly fitted our particular burden was to the back. When affliction first comes to us, we are tempted to cry out, "Is there any sorrow like unto my sorrow?" But when it is over we say, "I am glad that I had my own cross, my own burden to bear, and not somebody else's. Only my own cross could have strengthened me for my own life." So we thank God for the sorrow and for the joy that has come with it. And having borne so much in the past, we know that we shall be able to bear whatever may come to us in the future.

Mourn for what? Mourn for anything in such a way that it throws us upon the power which makes for righteousness and happiness, the Power which in one sense is not ourselves, and in another sense is our highest, truest self; the Power in whom we live and move and have our being. And mourn for anything in such a way as throws us more upon each other, or makes us understand each other better. For what is the blessing that comes to those who mourn? Simply, that through suffering, rightly accepted, we enter into closer relations with man and God; that is after we have suffered awhile, we are made perfect, stablished, strengthened, settled.

For again we must remind ourselves that the perfect man is he whose relations with God and man are perfect, he who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, with all his soul, with all his mind, with all his strength, and his neighbor as

himself. Love and love only is the fulfillment of the law. But we only love as we understand, and we only come to a full understanding as we suffer. The Everlasting Arms are always underneath, but we do not always appreciate that fact until sorrow presses us down into the underneath. Then the comfort is that we enter into fellowship with the Comforter, understand the heart of God.

But not only is there very little fellowship with God without suffering, there is also very little real fellowship with man. It is in times of suffering that we "cry unto our fellow, and our fellow hears and comes, and we mourn together under the sun, until again we laugh together, and are but half sorry between us." [1] And when, as often happens, he who hath no fellow in times of sorrow gains a fellow, surely his mourning has brought him the richest blessing that can come to any one. No wonder that his sorrow soon becomes but a story of sorrow, a story with the happiest of endings. For "it is fellowship that is Heaven, the lack of fellowship that is Hell, fellowship that is life, the lack of fellowship that is death." And it is not only the particular precious fellowship that often comes to us in time of mourning, it is also that through mourning we enter into fellowship, because we enter into understanding, with all who mourn, that is with everybody.

In "Ferishtah's Fancies," Browning has put this

[1] William Morris' "Vision of John Ball."

all in a nutshell. Of the wise Dervish the question is asked:

> "Wherefore should any evil hap to man,
> From ache of flesh to agony of soul,
> Since God's all-mercy mates all-potency?"

In reply to which Ferishtah asks

> "What were the bond 'twixt man and man, dost judge,
> Pain once abolished?"

He then proceeds to ask the inquirer what he thinks of the reigning Shah. To which the reply is that he finds nothing to admire in him, he is Shah only in virtue of the fact that he happened to be the eldest son of the last Shah. And although Ferishtah calls his attention to various things in the Shah that he might admire, all fail to move him until he tells him that he is wasting away with internal ulcer. Then the scorner becomes all sympathy, is eager to suggest remedies. From which change in attitude Ferishtah draws the conclusion

> "Put pain from out the world, what room were left
> For thanks to God, for love to man? .....
> ..... Thanks to God,
> And love to man, from man to take these away,
> And what is man worth?"

Since there is no growth save growth in understanding, growth in love, growth in understanding

and loving God, growth in understanding and loving man, and since full growth and understanding can come only through suffering, it seems to me wrong, nothing short of blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of God within us, to say, as I have known people to say, "I will steel myself against suffering, I will not allow myself to suffer, I will not allow myself to feel except as I absolutely have to." There are even those who go so far as to refuse to bestow their affection upon people whom they would really like to love, because they are afraid of the suffering that it might involve. To the extent that one is able to carry out such a resolution, one has cut one's self off from fellowship with man and with God. That is one has failed to fulfil the purpose for which one was created. For we were meant to live and to taste the fulness of life!

Among the folk songs which Carmen Sylva has collected in "The Bard of the Dimbo Vitza," there is one entitled "The Draught of Tears," the story of the man who, having swallowed his own tears, has no longer any feeling left for anything or anybody.

"For he doth thirst no more,
Therefore for other's thirst he has no pity.
He lets the rain lie heavy on his cloak,
And blesses not the rain;
Sees the brooks flow, and blesses not the brooks.
He gazes on the well's cool deeps,
Nor blesses its cool deeps,

For this is he who drank of his own tears,
His thirst is qenched forever;
He let them trickle down into his glass,
Let the sun glitter on them, and the moon
Mirror herself therein.
And sun and moon both said, "What crystal water!"
Then did he put it to his lips and drink!
And his lips spake, "What fiery, burning water!"
This is the man who drank of his own tears."

Is it possible to imagine a life a more hopeless failure than this? It is true that sometimes the strength of the will, perverted though it be, of the man who has drunk of his own tears, his power to accomplish his purpose, calls forth a certain sort of admiration, but how inaccessible he is! He is generally a correct man, at least he is free from physical vice. He is frequently, in a worldly way, a successful man; indeed his motive in not allowing himself to feel has often been the fear that too great feeling would interfere with his efficiency, his success in life. But is there any real success in life apart from loving and making one's self loved? And is not the merely being accessible to all more, infinitely more, than worldly success, or even than doing tangible things for other people?

I do not mean of course that one should waste one's self in diffuse, meaningless sociability, or in ineffectual, fruitless feeling; but I do mean that somehow each of us should make it clear that for us to live is to love. The expression that love takes will, of course, differ with different people,

and we must be careful not to condemn any one merely because he follows not with us, but in some way every one should make it clear that for him the object of life is love, and the expression of love.

> "For life, with all it yields of joy and woe,
> And hope and fear, believe the aged friend,
> Is just our chance o' the prize of learning love,
> How love might be, hath been indeed and is."

To refuse the joy and the pain, the hope and the fear, is to refuse the chance of the prize, that is, to refuse our chance of love, our chance of life, for love is life.

And yet, on the other hand, we must not give ourselves up to the luxury of enjoying sorrow, we must not enshrine ourselves in it, we must not make it an object of morbid self-gratification. It is certainly one of the good signs of the present century that people, especially women, no longer feel that it is a fine and noble thing to cherish grief, that Maggie Tulliver's Aunt Pullet has gone out of fashion. The objection to such sentimental mourning is not only that it is weakening to ourselves, and depressing to others, unfitting both the mourners, and those with whom they come in contact, for doing their best work in the world, but also that it is false. God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The whole life should be a worship of God, mourning quite as much as anything else.

But nothing which is not in spirit and in truth can be worship. Nothing can be worship that leads to nothing, that does not bear fruit.

Should we mourn for sin? When I ask the girls in my Bible classes what they should mourn for, they usually put sin first, but I suspect that that is because they think it the correct thing to say. We certainly do not mourn for sin as our fathers did, we no longer have the strong sense of sin that they had. Is this a loss? Frankly, I think it a great gain. There are just two temptations which seem to me to be the most dangerous to which we are ever subjected: First, the temptation to be so well satisfied with ourselves, that we have no disposition to improve; and second, the disposition to be so ill satisfied with ourselves, that we lack the strength and the courage to improve.

I remember that when I was a little girl my father had occasion to correct me for something. Because I was inclined to take any reproof that came from him overmuch to heart, he was very timid about it. So he took me upon his lap and began, oh! so tenderly! "My little girl," and when I asked what the trouble was, he said, "I would rather that you had not done so and so." When I said that I was sorry, he replied, "I don't want you to be sorry, I only want you not to do it again." That is the kind of father God is. He does not want us to be sorry, He only wants us not to do it again.

For sin, like disease, is to be dwelt upon, only long enough to understand it, and get rid of it. We must understand it, not only that we may get rid of it in ourselves and others, but also that through this understanding we may come into closer fellowship, not only with God who forgives sin, but also with man who sins. For it is through understanding our own sin that we come to understand the sin of others, and so enter into fellowship with our fellow sinners, and with God who understands and forgives us all. That is God's purpose for us in all the mourning that He sends to us, deeper fellowship. And we can only miss this purpose as we let mourning over disappointment make us bitter, or mourning over sin make us weak.

IV

THE MEEK

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!"

Here is another example of the fact that because we have always been familiar with the Beatitudes, we take them as a matter of course, almost as axiomatic, and yet when we stop to think about them, we realize that they are not at all self-evident. Indeed most of them, if we should hear them for the first time, would be extremely surprising and puzzling, and perhaps none of them would seem more of an enigma than this one. For myself, I had said this Beatitude thoughtlessly for years, and when I first really did give it a little superficial thought, I found it unworthy, and even provoking, "the least of all the Beatitudes, and not meet to be called a Beatitude."

In the first place, in the face of Jesus' constant teaching about riches, the blessing promised, to inherit the earth, seemed a rather doubtful good, and at least altogether out of keeping with the other blessings promised. Everywhere else the blessing was spiritual, here it was material.

Moreover in actual life, this blessing, such as it is, does not seem to be realized. Everywhere we see that if inheriting the earth means getting rich, it is the pushing, aggressive man who does it, not the meek, patient man.

And if the reward is a doubtful blessing, so the quality to be rewarded seemed to me rather a questionable virtue. When I ask my girls what meekness is, they sometimes say mean-spiritedness. And I do think that it is something like this that we commonly have in mind when we use the word, and we none of us really believe that mean-spiritedness is a virtue. Indeed meekness, as we commonly understand it, instead of arousing our admiration, generally throws us into a more or less violent state of irritation. We associate it with the worm that never turns, or with the ass who is too stupid and phlegmatic to resent the most unjust treatment, and we do not admire either animal.

Indeed, when I heard of a drunken brute, who gave as his reason for beating his wife, that he was tired of seeing her around looking so meek, I confess to feeling some sympathy with him. Workers among the poor tell us that it is the meek, patient wife, whose sole object seems to be to please her husband, who is most often abused. One man is reported to have said, "No, I don't never strike my missis. You see she would strike back, and though I could easily get the best of her, I don't like no rumpus like that." And I

know of a district nurse who, bearing this in mind, advises the women in her district never to take a blow, without in some way getting even with their husbands. The results of acting upon this advice appear generally to be excellent, blows soon cease.

And when we get higher up in the social scale, we do not find the member of the family who has no life of her own, who is at every one's beck and call, the one who is most loved or admired. Too often the tendency is to take advantage of such people, and then, instead of thanking them, to snub them. We are so sure of their attentions that we are not at all grateful for them; whatever they do, we expect more.

And then although we may like the thing that they do, the manner in which they do it is often offensive, for their very anxiety to please makes them shy, clumsy and awkward. It seems as though their very desire for love makes it impossible for them to win it. Moreover, they appear never to expect to win it. They seem to feel that they do not deserve it. We prefer that they should be a little less humble, a little less conscious that love is not for them, and then perhaps they would obtain it. And all the time they irritate us the more, because they are so good and so self-sacrificing, that they put us in the wrong. There seems to be no excuse for not liking them, but we cannot. Sometimes, like the drunken husband, we get tired of seeing them around looking so meek, and we speak to them with a severity

that we know they have not deserved. They take it with an air of meek resignation, as though they were conscious of having merited it, or at least as though it was what they expected. We would prefer that they should get angry with us, and give us the rebuke that we know that we ought to have.

But are we altogether wrong in feeling as we do about these so-called meek people? I think that a careful analysis of the case will show that we are not. In the first place, while such people submit to everybody, do things for everybody, they do not appear to actively enjoy doing anything; they are utterly lacking in enthusiasm. Their attitude is simply that of submitting to what is put upon them; they do what they do either from a mistaken idea of duty, or else because they crave a love, that because of their lack of personality, they can never win. We only love one who is somebody, no one loves a nobody.

That is the great trouble with them, they are nobodies, they are absolutely lacking in the initiative which is the first essential of personality. They have no scheme of life at all, no definite things that they want to do, no definite path on which they wish to advance, no definite self which they wish to develop. Of course there is such a thing as having too unyielding a scheme of life, but perhaps it is no worse to think too much about the self than it is to have no self to think

about, no worse to be selfish than it is to have no self to be selfish.

And after all society is not so much in danger from the really bad people, as it is from the weak, vague, drifting people, who having no initiative, no minds of their own, are open to suggestions of all kinds. If there is danger of thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, there is at least an equal danger of thinking of ourselves more lowly than we ought to think. It has been well said that one cannot argue on one's knees, therefore that it is right that he who is on his knees to everybody should be respected by nobody. Indeed, we are coming more and more to see that if meek resignation means stupid or thoughtless resignation, it is a thing not to be admired, but to be condemned. We must accept even the laws of God, not as the servant who knoweth not what his Lord doeth, but as the friend, who knows something, and who is trying to know more. We must dare to search and question.

But if meek people of this type have any object in life at all, it is simply to please, or, worse still, just not to offend. And generally speaking the inoffensive person is the most offensive person of all. It may be all very well for the dog to live simply to please his master, for we do not expect him to have a scheme of life of his own. It may be quite right for the dog to live chiefly to gratify

his master's whims, but we think it no more right for the man to live wholly to gratify another's whims, than it would be to live wholly for the gratification of his own whims. If one is self-sacrificing it should be for a real purpose. We should love our neighbor as ourselves; but we should love ourselves wisely, and so we should love our neighbor wisely.

Just as we are to love the Lord our God with all our minds, so in our love for ourselves and our neighbor, the mind should have its part. The command "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them," is to be interpreted not what ye would when ye are whimsical, but what ye would, when ye use your best judgment. In what we do for our neighbor, we are under the same obligation to use our judgment as we are in what we do for ourselves. Only very young children like people who live solely to please them. And there are even children who, having attained their personality at an early age, despise such people. The truth is we feel that one who lives simply to gratify our whims, not only has no personality of his own, but has a very low estimate of our personality. For if we are really developed people, we do not consider it a matter of importance that our whims should be gratified, and we are offended with any one who supposes that we do.

And the sympathy of these people is often quite as bungling as their efforts to please. For hav-

ing no personality of their own, they have no understanding of the personality of another, they sympathize with one person in exactly the same way that they sympathize with another. Here the dog has a great advantage over them, for he at least does not make the mistake of thinking that we are sad when we are not. He simply feels that we are sad or glad, and sympathizes with our moods, without asking what has produced them; and then he cannot talk and say stupid things. The undeveloped person argues that what would make him sad, would make any one else sad, and so, having had what should make us sad, we must be sad. We, on the contrary, are perhaps not sad at all, or if we are, and do want sympathy, it must be expressed in the way in which our personality demands. We are not children, we sorrow not as the child sorrows, and it is not the child's or even the dog's sympathy that we want from the grown person.

Yes, there is beauty in the giving of one's self, and it is only as we give ourselves that we can ever fully become ourselves, we must go out of ourselves to find ourselves. But before we can give, we must have something to give, we must in some manner at least become ourselves before we can give ourselves. We cannot fulfill our duty to others, except as we have first fulfilled our duty to ourselves, have done our utmost to make ourselves as worth while as possible.

"Among the many beautiful things that turn

through mistaken use to utter evil," says Ruskin, "I am not sure but that the thoughtlessly meek and self-sacrificing spirit of good men must be named as the fatallest." For when we starve our own souls in order to give to other souls, we often find not only that there is not enough for them and for us, but even that there is absolutely nothing for either of us. So the wise virgins were not selfish, but wise, when they refused to give their oil to the foolish virgins. It is possible for us to use our lamps to lighten the pathway of others, but to try to give them of our oil is simply to squander it. Too many mothers have not given themselves so much as wasted themselves, ministering to their children; for children want not so much what their mothers can do for them, they want their mother. Love should go out of itself to find itself, not to lose itself.

The truth is that the present generation has put a bad meaning into the word meek, just as it has put a bad meaning into the word pious. True meekness, the meekness that Jesus commends, is the exact opposite of the stupid aimlessness that now passes, or fails to pass, under that name. So far from the meek man being the man who has no aim in life, he is rather the man who is all aim, the man whose mind is so set upon his aim that he entirely forgets himself, forgets to be exalted and forgets to be abased; he has neither false conceit, nor false modesty.

And what is the aim? Tagore, who has cast

more illumination upon this subject than any one else has done, has well expressed it when he says: "The aim of the teachers of India was the realization of the soul, or in other words, gaining the world in perfect truth. When Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth" he meant this. He proclaimed the truth, that when man gets rid of his pride of self, then he comes into his true inheritance. No more has he to fight his way into his position in the world! it is secure to him everywhere by the immortal right of his soul. Pride of self interferes with the proper function of the soul, which is to realize itself by perfecting its union with the world and the world's God."

No, meekness is not the aimlessness that submits blindly to circumstances, to what we falsely call destiny! It is rather the wisdom that controls circumstances, that controls destiny. At its lowest it is almost synonymous with self-control, or, as Henry Ward Beecher puts it, it is "the best side of a man under provocation, maintaining itself in the best mood, and thus controlling all men." At its highest it is the complete absorption of the soul in high aims, that makes conscious self-control unnecessary; there seems to be no self to control, the man has lost himself in his aim, which is only another way of saying that he has lost himself in his God.

One of our great men has recently made the statement that we despise a nation, as we despise

an individual, who does not resent an insult. But do we despise the individual who does not resent an insult? I grant that there is a tendency to despise the man who is cowed by an insult; he gets on our nerves. But what about the man who is so occupied in what he is doing, that he simply does not know that he has been insulted?

Some time ago I heard of a man who was serving on an important commission. In expressing his opinion on the subject under debate he said something that so infuriated another member of the commission, that he struck him in the face with a roll of paper that he happened to have in his hand. But the speaker was so occupied in what he was saying that he did not even notice it, he just finished what he had to say. He could hardly be said to exercise self-control, for he scarcely knew that he had been struck. And he carried his point, for when he had finished, the whole commission, even the man that had struck him, acknowledged that he was right.

He carried his point! Herein is the clue to the meaning of the expression "to inherit the earth." For what is an heir? Is he not the man who is entitled to a certain inheritance, a certain place in the world? and he comes into his inheritance when he takes that place, accomplishes the thing that God meant him to do, fulfils God's ideal for him. Thus it is that the heir of God comes into his father's house, into his home.

My old Wellesley teacher, Miss Morgan, used

to define home as the place where we can be our best. And when we stop to think of it, this is not really an unusual sense of the word, it is what we all mean when we use the expression " at home." We feel at home with a person, or in a place, when we are at our ease with that person, or in that place, and so able to be and to do our best. In that sense are we not all here in the world to find our home, in order that we may find ourselves? In the beginning God made a world for each separate man. He puts us here in order that each might find his own world, his own inheritance, his own home. And it is only the meek who can fully find his home, and he will never fail to do so. For home, like the kingdom of heaven, is within us.

To go back to Henry Ward Beecher's definition, " Meekness is the best side of a man under provocation, maintaining himself in the best mood and thus controlling all men," the meek man controls all men, as the man whom I have cited did, because he makes them see that he is right, and thus he controls them not only outwardly, but inwardly. It is sometimes possible to control men outwardly by making them afraid of us, but in that case we have not controlled them, we have only controlled their actions. Indeed, he who obeys because he does not dare to disobey is always in silent inward rebellion — in fact, any conscious obedience is, in a sense, rebellious. In order to really control others, we must first con-

trol ourselves, hence real meekness differs little from wise self-control.

But the man who is meek in the perverted sense in which the word was used at the beginning of this paper never controls any one, not even himself, for he has no self to control. He has not controlled himself, but has repressed himself, until there is no self left, either to control or to repress. Self-control differs from self-repression, in that it is used only as a means toward an end. Self-control means simply the subduing or the keeping within proper proportions of such instincts, or impulses, as there is a definite reason for subduing or guiding, but self-repression means an instinctive, perhaps an inherited, subduing of instincts and impulses, merely for the sake of subduing them, and that is nothing less than the repression or annihilation of life itself. The self has not been controlled, it has been destroyed, for when life ceases to be eager, spontaneous and enthusiastic, it ceases to be life at all.

The truly meek are never the victims of their temperaments, but on the other hand they never seek to destroy their temperaments, for to destroy the temperament is to destroy the personality. They never subdue themselves, they only subdue that which keeps them from being themselves. They do not blindly submit to circumstances, for there is a definite goal which they are striving to reach. From this goal they are turned by no obstacle which it is possible to over-

come, but when the obstacles are really insurmountable, they waste no strength bubbling in impotent fury. And thus they reach their goal, for he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city, and he generally takes the city!

For true meekness will always in the deepest sense control destiny, and it always knows that it will. Therefore, the truly meek man may be defined as the man who sees the proportions of things; the man who has set his feet firm on some portion of eternal truth, and then is infinitely patient with people who are too stupid, or even too wicked, to perceive it, for he is sure that the truth will in the end prevail; the truth that he sees in so far as it is the real truth, but in any case, the real truth.

And he works for the truth that he sees so long as he so sees it, but keeps his eyes open for an ever-widening vision. His attitude is "Whatever is, is best, when I have done my best." He is not discouraged even when he has not done his best. For then his attitude is "Whatever is, even when it is the result of my not having done my best, is the best that I can have now, and therefore it is to be made the best of. Instead of giving up the struggle, or wasting time in repining, let me now do the best that I can with what is left." Perhaps, too, in a larger sense, in the great working out of things, it may even turn out to be the absolute best. For even our sins can be made a means

of strengthening our inner lives. They too can shed a light upon our souls, can be made the stepping stones on which we rise to higher things.

Even when we have done our best, there will be, of course, circumstances which we cannot control, calamities that we cannot avert. The farmer cannot control the weather, but that does not prevent him from working as hard as he can to control such forces of nature as it is possible to bend to his purposes. So the truly meek man uses all the means at his disposal to avert tragedy, but when in spite of everything it comes, he accepts it with equanimity, not in the spirit of resignation, but of co-operation. For it is not resignation that gladdens and uplifts us, it is co-operation.

We pray, "Thy will be done," but we should pray gladly, not sorrowfully, and we should not only pray for it, we should work for it. "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification." But we are to work out our own sanctification, the will of God should not be something to which we sorrowfully submit, but something for which we gladly work. And therefore our business is to find out what it is, and work for it. "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth," but it is the friend's business to read the mind of his friend. So the business of life is to read the mind of God in such a way as to become the friend of God, to find out what the good and perfect will of God is, and to do it.

And when we find that we have made mistakes, so far from being discouraged, we should rejoice that we have acquired the wisdom to perceive our errors. For if what seemed right to us yesterday seems wrong today, it is because we have passed on to a higher plane, have come to know God better. For what is God, or God's will, to any one of us, save our own highest ideal of righteousness? And we are to rise to higher things, not only on stepping stones of our dead selves, but on stepping stones of our dead ideals.

Nothing in the character of Goethe is more inspiring, than the joy with which he welcomed the experiences, which contributed to unlearning what was false, as well as the experiences which contributed to learning what was true. For nothing was so joyous to him as to feel himself grow, and he grew by unlearning as well as by learning. Therefore it was an object with him, while preserving his identity, to be constantly putting his old self behind him. "The Regeneration," he writes from Italy, "which is changing me within and without, continues to work. The more I am obliged to renounce my former self, the more delighted I am."

"The soul that is meekly honest!" I came across that expression the other day. What does this mean save the soul that is honestly seeking the truth, instead of opposing his own will to it? who is willing to give up even his conception of truth for what proves to be the real truth, the

soul that does not resent or resist the truth, the soul that receives sorrow and disappointment meekly, so that it becomes to it sweetness and not bitterness, a source of strength rather than a source of weakness.

We attain this poise, this self-possession, this equanimity, this meekness, as we have perfect confidence that if we honestly strive to do our part, what ever has been, is, and will be, is right. No mistake, no calamity is then irreparable; we can always convert it into something that is not a mistake, something that is not calamity. For the Father hath put all things into our hands, all things that we ought to have, and we come from God, and go to God.

So much for the attitude of the meek toward external people, toward external things. What about their attitude toward themselves? Well, they do not think of themselves more highly than they ought to think, but, on the other hand, they do not think of themselves more lowly than they ought to think. Indeed, their charm consists in the fact that they do not seem to think of themselves at all. They have neither the self-appreciation, nor the self-depreciation, both of which spring from thinking too much about ourselves, and both of which prevent people from entering into easy relations with their fellows. Being neither shy nor self-assertive, they are at ease in any company. They can take either a high place or a low place without self-consciousness, think-

ing none the better of themselves because it is high, and none the less of themselves because it is low. The important thing is not that it should be a high place or a low place, but that it should be their place, the place which they can fill. They know that to belittle themselves is just as snobbish as to exalt themselves, that it is just as bad to be conscious that the place that they can fill is a small one, as it is to be conscious that it is a great one.

For whatever talents we may possess are gifts, and there is no occasion to be exalted if they have been bestowed, or to be humiliated if they have been withheld. And when we cannot do great things ourselves, we should be just as glad to see others do them, for in the life of the world, the important thing is not that we should do great things, but that great things should be done. And in our own lives the important thing is that we should be and do what we can, be that little or great. We are to run with patience the race that is set before us, but that race is not one in which the object is to get ahead of others, but one in which the object is to reach the goal, a goal which we can all reach, for, for each of us the goal is simply his best. And my attaining my best self does not interfere with your attaining your best self.

However, this does not mean that each of us is to be content with the place in which he may at any particular time find himself, if that place

does not happen to be the one in which he can be his best. We are not to choose the principal place at the feast, but there is a difference between wanting the principal place at the feast, a mere honor, and wanting an opportunity for fuller development and wider service, more and better work. It used to be said that Abraham Lincoln never sought an office, but I am glad that the facts correct that popular superstition. When the elder Pitt said to the Duke of Devonshire, "My lord, I know that I can save this country, and that no one else can," if he honestly believed what he said, he was not only justified in seeking office, but he would have been criminal if he had not sought it. For it is right to strive even for a high place, if one honestly wants it, not for the prestige that it brings, but for the work, the service that it makes possible.

Yes, there are those for whom it is right at times to seek high office, but it must be sought in the spirit of him who said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended, but I follow after, if by any means I may apprehend that for which I have been apprehended of Christ Jesus." Or in the spirit of Him who cried, "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children, as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not." If that be egotism or self-seeking, make the most of it.

WAITING

Serene, I fold my hands and wait
  Nor care for wind, or tide, or sea;
I rave no more 'gainst time or fate,
  For lo! my own shall come to me.

I stay my haste, I make delays,
  For what avails this eager pace?
I stand amid the eternal ways,
  And what is mine shall know my face.

Asleep, awake, by night or day,
  The friends I seek are seeking me;
No wind can drive my bark away,
  Nor change the tide of destiny.

What matter if I stand alone?
  I wait with joy the coming years;
My heart shall reap where it hath sown,
  And garner up its fruit of tears.

The waters know their own and draw
  The brook that springs in yonder height;
So flows the good with equal law
  Unto the soul of pure delight.

The stars come nightly to the sky,
  The tidal wave into the sea;
Nor time nor space, nor deep, nor high
  Can keep my own away from me.

JOHN BURROUGHS.

V

THEY THAT HUNGER AND THIRST AFTER RIGHTEOUSNESS

"Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." With what will they be filled? Why, with righteousness, the thing after which they hunger and thirst! Goodness itself is the assured and only reward of goodness. Heaven and Hell, considered as reward and punishment, are immoral inventions.

Why is it that we ever do wrong? In the last analysis, is it not because we really do not wish to do right? Yet we often hear people say very earnestly, "I do want to do right, but it just seems as though I couldn't." "They tell us that we can always do right if we try hard enough," Mr. Barrie writes. "So I suppose that Tommy didn't try hard enough, but only God knows how hard he did try." And as we look into our own hearts, we must admit that there is such a thing as doing wrong when in a sense we would like to do right, but that is because while, up to a certain point, we do want to do right, we want to do wrong more. For, in the last analysis, we always

do the thing that we want most to do. So that if we really want to do right more than we want to do anything else, we will do it.

That is, if we truly hunger and thirst after righteousness, as the starving man hungers after bread, and as the thirsty man thirsts after water, we will surely have it. But we must remember that, compared with his desire for food, the hungry man desires nothing else; compared with his desire for drink, the thirsty man has no other desire. And the spiritual hunger and thirst must be just as intense as the physical hunger and thirst. Then, and then only, is it certain of gratification. "If with all your hearts ye seek Me, ye shall surely find Me."

For while alas! it is possible to hunger after food and drink, and not be filled, it is not possible to hunger and thirst after righteousness, and not be filled. And just as food and drink keep the body alive, so righteousness keeps the soul alive. For the soul is that part of us which aspires after, and unites us with the Infinite and Eternal, and only through righteousness is that aspiration kept alive, that union maintained. Thus righteousness is the food of the soul, without which the soul cannot live.

And yet there is a difficulty. I remember poor George III., who did seem to want to do right, and to make others do right, (the latter of course was his weakness), and yet managed to do more harm than his two predecessors put together,

neither of whom cared about doing right. Must we conclude, then, that while he who hungers and thirsts after righteousness, will surely be filled with it, in so far as he understands what it is, there can yet be no assurance that his understanding will be guided aright?

The truth seems to be that it is quite as much our duty to find out what righteousness is, as it is to do it after we have found out. That is, the honest effort to find out what righteousness is, is a part of righteousness, perhaps the most important part, certainly the most difficult part. It is quite as much our duty to serve the Lord our God with all our minds, as it is to serve Him with all our strength. Serving Him with all the mind means self-development; serving Him with all the strength means self-control. On the whole the former is more important than the latter, for while self-control is only a means, self-development is an end, the end for which we were created. God created us that we should fulfil ourselves, not that we should restrain ourselves. As the sin against the Spirit is to doubt the Spirit, so the sin against life is to deny life. Restraint can only be tolerated as a temporary, partial means toward fulfillment. But when perfect fulfillment is reached, that which is perfect is come, "law, life, joy, impulse are one thing."

We sometimes wish that there were a Voice from Heaven to tell us just what the right thing was. We would be willing to do it if only we

knew what it was! But if such a Voice could come, we would be deprived of the opportunity to serve the Lord our God with all our minds, that is, of our chance of self-development, our chance of becoming ourselves, which is only another way of saying our chance of becoming one with the Father. The child does not become one with his father through obeying commands that he does not understand, but by understanding his father's nature, and his father's wishes so well, that commands are unnecessary. So it is only as we are able to find out the will of God without being told, that we can really become one with Him, think His thoughts, understand His nature, hear His voice, not as something outside of us, but as something within us. "This is life eternal, to know Thee, the only true God." But we can never know Him through just being told about Him, He must speak within us.

"Blessed art thou, Simon bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto Thee, but my Father which is in Heaven." And the Father spoke not to Him, but within Him. When the union of two spirits is complete, there is no need of speaking to each other. "In that day ye shall ask me nothing," and I will tell you nothing. There is no need of asking or telling, for I am you and you are I, we are made perfect in one. In so far as I understand my friend, I am one with my friend. In so far as I understand God, I am one with God.

It is this sense of oneness with the Father that distinguishes Jesus from all the prophets that came before Him. The Old Testament prophets thought of Jehovah as something outside of themselves, guiding and directing them. Jesus, on the other hand, thought of the Father as one with Himself, "I and the Father are one." He had no need of any one to testify to Him of man, for He Himself knew what was in man. And so He had no need of any one to testify to Him of God, for He Himself knew what was in God. God was in Him, and He was in God. And His prayer for His disciples was that they should be united with, identified with the Father, even as He was. "No man knoweth the Father, save the Son." That is, to know God, we must become sons of God. Only by the God within us can we know the God above us.

To the superficial reader, it may be rather shocking to find Oscar Wilde writing, "I don't care whether I am a better man or not, provided only I am a deeper man." But what is it to be a deeper man? Is it not to understand man better, and to understand God better? And can one be a deeper man without being a better man? We are told that David was a man after God's own heart. What can this mean save that he was a deep man, a man who had learned to understand man, a man who had learned to understand God? And he had learned this largely through his mistakes.

Oscar Wilde tells us that morality had no interest for him. After all, there is a sense in which it had no interest for Jesus, the morality that consists in outward forms. For forms teach nothing, it is only inner experiences that teach. "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the letter profiteth nothing."

The truth is that the Divine government is not, as frequently represented, an absolute monarchy, or a benevolent despotism; it is a democracy. And the superiority of democracy to paternalism does not consist in the fact that the laws are better, they frequently are not. Indeed, if we consider any one generation, it is often possible to find that better things are done, better conditions created, under paternalism than under democracy. The advantage which a successful democracy has over a successful despotism is, not that it makes better laws, or even better outward actions, but that it makes better developed people. For through making their laws, that is through formulating their ideals, the people make themselves. So God allows us to make our own laws, that is to find out His laws, for ourselves, even at the risk of making great mistakes. For the object of the Divine government is not to make laws, but to make men. And our failures, quite as much as our successes, help us to be men.

When I was a young girl I had to make an important decision. After I had made it, I had reason to think that my father disapproved of it,

but when I questioned him on the subject, he replied, "Well, it is better that you should decide for yourself, than that I should decide for you. Even if you are making a mistake, it is better that you should make a mistake for yourself, than that I should make it for you." Yes, the mistakes which we make for ourselves, especially when we have honestly tried to find the right course, are developing, while the mistakes which others make for us, are too often only embittering. But not only are the honest mistakes which we make for ourselves more developing than the mistakes which others make for us, but they often bring us nearer to God, than even the wise decisions made for us by others.

For we are here, not even to find righteousness, we are here to find ourselves. We find ourselves through finding righteousness, but only through finding it ourselves, not through having it found for us. Indeed, in the last analysis, unrighteousness would seem to be nothing save unwillingness to think, wilful inability to think straight, a refusal to use our reason, in reliance upon the Power that has given us that reason.

But while democracy is the highest ideal of government, it is of course an adventure, and a dangerous adventure. Yet, dangerous as it is, it is nothing like so dangerous as the adoption of a rule-of-thumb morality, adopting it not only for one's self, but attempting to force it upon others. That is not only the most dangerous, but the most

sinful thing that it is possible to do. For it is both to lose one's own soul, through stifling all chance for its development, and to endanger the souls of others. "Quench not the Spirit," the principle of growth within you. And the Puritan is in fully as much danger of quenching the Spirit as is the libertine.

Much has been written about the dangers arising from an excessive or perverted emotional nature. But what about the danger of an excessive or perverted will? the will that, as in the case of poor George III., is used to close both the mind and the heart, to stifle the voice within us that is trying to say, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

The truth is that we are too apt to mistake hungering and thirsting after our own way, trying to impose our own will upon others, for hungering and thirsting after righteousness. What passes for a strong will is often mere obstinacy, wilfulness rather than will. And wilfulness differs from will, in that there is no mind behind it, it is will that is not able to justify itself.

In one of his books, Professor Sumner of Yale carries his well-known delight of putting truth in the form of paradox, to the extent of asserting that, of all dangerous citizens, quite the most dangerous is the man of principle. Now there is nothing of which we are prouder than of having principles, and of sticking to them through thick and thin, regardless of consequences. Professor

Sumner, however, contended that these so-called principles are dangerous, because too often they degenerate into iron rules of conduct, that take no account of changing conditions, because based on the idea that right and wrong are absolute, not relative.

For there is only one righteousness which is absolute, and that is of the spirit, and not of the letter; it consists in loving the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength, and our neighbor as ourselves. Perfect love for God, perfect love for the neighbor, perfect, that is enlightened love for the self, is the only real righteousness, the only righteousness that does not deprive us of the individuality and the sympathy that we were put here to develop. Any righteousness that is developed at the expense of initiative and tenderness is sheer loss.

The form of expression that the love that is righteousness should take, is left to our God-given reason to determine. Certainly it does not express itself by blindly following a line of conduct fixed years ago, before the conditions of the present age could possibly be known. For not only is true love never blind, it never sees with other people's eyes.

No! God does not supply us with rules of righteousness, He is a source of righteousness. Like the lute-player in the "Bard of the Dimbo-Vitza."

"If thou art thirsty He will ne'er
Give thee a drink, but show thee where
His well doth stand."

Moreover, conventional righteousness cannot be the real righteousness, for if it were, it could be fully attained, and growth would stop. The soul would have no chance to build more lofty chambers as the old decay. We are to be filled with righteousness, but that means that we are to be filled now, up to the limits of our present capacity, filled and satisfied for now, but not filled or satisfied for all time. For to be filled permanently, to have satisfied one's desire for all time, to have attained one's final end, is not Heaven, but Hell. In his "Child of the Dawn," Mr. Benson makes Hell the land of satisfied desire. And the land of permanently satisfied desire, even when that desire is for righteousness, is indeed Hell. "Wherefore, that that which is should be perfect is not allotted, for if it is lacking in naught, then it is lacking in all things."

Nevertheless, "Ye shall be perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." But our Father in Heaven is for each of us his own highest ideal, and the highest ideal of today is supplanted by the still higher ideal of tomorrow. The music that one loves the best is that which speaks to the soul of something far off and unattainable. And to each poet the song that he never wrote is the dearest song.

But while we are not to accept conventional

standards because they are conventional, neither are we to reject them on that account. I once knew two little girls whose mother had set them on a long summer afternoon to do some examples in division of fractions. The younger child set to work at once, and finished them before the other, who was fretting away nervously, had even made a beginning. The child whose task was completed exclaimed impatiently, "Mildred, why don't you hurry up and do your examples, so that you can come out and play?" "Because," was the reply, "I don't understand them." "Why," retorted the other, "it is perfectly simple. Just turn the divisors upside down, and multiply numerators and denominators together." "Oh, I know that," answered the first, "and could have done it as quickly as you did, but I didn't understand why that is dividing, and I won't do one thing until I understand why." "Oh," said the little sister, "it is dividing because the book says so, and because mother says so." "Helen Brown," was the indignant and superior reply, "if you are going to believe everything just because books say so, and mother says so, I pity you."

And, indeed, there was ground for pity. Nevertheless the little sister might have retorted with equal force, "Mildred Brown, if you are going to disbelieve everything just because books say so, and because mother says so, I pity you."

For the experience of the ages is not to be de-

spised; it must count for something, must indeed count for a great deal. Every student of history or of sociology knows that there is or was a real reason behind almost every convention, that to obey conventions is often simply to let the great social conscience make short-cut decisions for us. So we are neither to accept nor to reject conventions simply because they are conventions, we are to prove all things, to hold fast that which is good. It is possible that in our search after righteousness, we may, as Mr. Chesterton says, sail all around the globe only to find England again, but the England that we have discovered for ourselves is different from the England that we have accepted from others. Accepted platitudes are deadening, realized platitudes are life-giving.

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets. I am come not to destroy, but to fulfil!" Nevertheless, "except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," the people who appear to care most about the law and the prophets, "ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven!" But how is our righteousness to exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? By its inwardness! Instead of paying so much attention to the outward actions, attend first to the inner thought and emotions. "God is a Spirit, and they who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth!" "My son, give me thy heart."

It is also to be noticed that the righteousness after which we hunger and thirst cannot be negative righteousness. For we cannot hunger and thirst after a negative good. We do not hunger and thirst not to have poison, we hunger and thirst to have food and drink. And just as it is impossible to hunger and thirst after negative righteousness, so it is impossible to be filled with it. Negations are not filling. Our religion must be an inspiring, not a repressive force. We do want to get rid of vice, but only as a means toward an end, that is, that the room which it occupies may be filled with virtue. For when the unclean spirit had gone out of the man, it was only that it might take to it seven other spirits worse than himself, and return again to the house that it found swept, garnished and empty.

So we must take care not to free ourselves from the vices of the body only to make room for the much more contemptible vices of the mind: pride, contempt, avarice and hypocrisy. For we may be sure that any righteousness that does not increase our love for our fellowmen is not righteousness, and will land us not in Heaven, but in Hell. From its etymology Hell is simply that which separates us, to be helled is to be shut off from. And he who has built a wall around himself so as to separate himself from his fellowmen is in hell, even though the wall be a wall of righteousness. There can be no loving the Lord our God with all our heart that does not include the love of the

neighbor. To love God in such a way as separates us from, makes us despise the neighbor, is really not to love, but to hate God.

And of course to hunger and thirst after righteousness is not to abstain from evil, because one is afraid of its consequences. If I abstain from being a drunkard, it should not be chiefly because I am afraid of the havoc of body and mind which drunkenness produces, the loss of social consideration and so forth, but because I am eagerly desirous of some positive development, some active service with which drunkenness would interfere. We cast sin away, not so much because we see the ugliness of sin, as because we see the beauty of holiness. Virtue must not be confounded with respectability.

Neither is it possible to take any credit to ourselves when we practice the negative virtues for the sake of getting on, rather than for the sake of rendering efficient service. We cannot serve God and mammon; neither can we make our service of God a means of serving mammon.

Moreover, no one who truly hungers and thirsts after righteousness can ever be made sour and sad by attaining it. Food makes the hungry man glad, water rejoices the heart of the thirsty man. So there is no one who really hungers and thirsts after righteousness, who does not shout for joy when he obtains it. The sanction of righteousness is happiness. For righteousness is the food of the soul, not its medicine. Moreover when we

really hunger and thirst after righteousness, all sense of duty vanishes. He who hungers and thirsts after righteousness no more does right from a sense of duty, than he who hungers and thirsts after food and drink eats and drinks from a sense of duty.

And true righteousness does not deprive us of an interest in life, for true righteousness, true saintliness, unites us with, rather than separates us from, our fellows.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world!" Yet "God so loved the world." And I think that He loved not only the people that are in the world, but all the beautiful things that are in the world, whether they are man-made or God-made. "My country right or wrong; if right, to keep it right; if wrong, to make it right." So we may also say, "This world of God's, right or wrong; if right, to keep it right; if wrong, to set it right."

What is the conclusion of the whole matter? It is this: If we really and truly try with all our hearts to find out what the good and perfect will of God is, we are sure to find out as much as God means us to find out for the present. "If with all your hearts ye seek Me, ye shall surely find Me."

If we hunger and thirst after righteousness, we are sure to be filled with what for us is righteousness, even though that righteousness be relative, and not absolute. For to live up to our own judgment and our own principles, having done all

that we could to make that judgment and those principles high, is subjective, if not objective righteousness. And if, when we have really used the best judgment that has been given to us, we still make mistakes, we must conclude that God means us to make mistakes, that He means to use even our mistakes to work out some higher purpose, some higher righteousness. So even in our mistakes, we have attained the righteousness that, at this stage, He meant us to attain. When Browning's Pope, exercising his best judgment, condemns Guido, he says

> " If some acuter wit, fresh-probing, sound
> His multifarious mass of words and deeds
> Deeper, and reach through guilt to innocence,
> I shall face Guido's soul, nor blench a jot.
> " God, who set me to judge thee, meted out
> So much of judging faculty, no more!
> Ask Him if I was slack in use thereof! "

For the error that is not our fault we are not responsible. God means us sometimes to find our way through error to truth. The truth that can be seen at once is generally superficial truth, or at best, objective truth, not subjective truth. For it is something outside, and not inside of us. Truth, to be truth for us, must, like the kingdom of heaven be within us. " If with all your hearts ye seek Me, ye shall surely find Me," and when that which is perfect is come, we shall find that even the mistakes were steps on the way to finding Him.

VI

THE MERCIFUL

Who is the merciful person? Is he the person who denies sin? If so, man's mercy must be very different from God's mercy, for God never denies sin. God recognizes, more than man does, the exceeding sinfulness of sin. No, the merciful man is he who, like God, does not deny sin, but who, also like God, understands it, understands sin and understands the sinner. I sometimes think that God can hardly be said to forgive us at all, He just understands us. And when we really understand, there is no room for forgiveness; love, sympathy and help take its place.

That is why we are never ashamed to confess our sins to God, for God is not only the spirit of love, but also the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of love because He is the spirit of wisdom and understanding. We do not love because we do not understand, or it may be we do not understand because we do not love. But God is the Spirit that understands all, not only what we do and say, but also the inmost thoughts of our hearts, just what the temptation to which we have succumbed was to us, all our

inherited tendencies, all the temptations that come to us from environment. He knows too the limited vision that has been granted to each of us, knows therefore that of all sinners it might be said, as Jesus said of those who did Him to death, "They know not what they do."

He understands too that while it is possible that in the best action of the best man, there is a seed of evil which, if allowed to develop, would be sufficient to damn, it is certain that in the worst actions of the worst man, there is a seed of good which, if allowed to develop, would be sufficient to save. And He has no need to judge after the sight of His eyes, or to reprove after the hearing of His ears, for He is able to see more than eyes can see, to hear more than ears can hear. He needeth not that any one should testify to Him of man, for He Himself knows what is in Man.

It is because we feel that men do not understand us that we cry out for a God who does. We are never quite happy in the presence of one who loves us, but from whom we are keeping something back. We feel that his love depends upon our keeping it back. The real friend is the friend who understands us fully, and who loves us just the same. But is there any such friend? Is it not because there is no such friend that we are obliged to believe in God? We read that of old Moses talked face to face with God as a man talketh with his friend. But nowadays I believe we are sometimes tempted to cry out, "Would

that there were a friend with whom we could talk face to face, as a man talketh with his God!"

I have just been reading Mr. H. G. Wells' "Research Magnificent." In it I find a character, Prothero, who does talk to his friend Benham, as intimately as a man talks to God. But in real life we rarely lay our hearts bare to our friends. There is always something that we keep back. We are afraid either that the friend would be bored, or that he would not understand, and therefore would be shocked. But whenever we feel that we are really thinking ourselves or anything else down to the bottom, we have a feeling that we are talking to God, the great Spirit of the Universe, who includes all, and therefore understands and loves all.

"Sir," said the Samaritan woman, "I perceive that thou art a prophet." And when Jesus proceeds to show her that He knows all about her sinful and sorrowful past, she does not seem to be at all ashamed, for in the presence of the true prophet, we may be sorry, but we are not ashamed. "Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?" What would the Christ, the Messiah, be to each of us, save a man who could tell us, and to whom we could tell, all things that ever we did, and not be ashamed?

So I could fancy no praise that would seem quite so great to me, as for one to say to me, that he would never be ashamed to tell me anything.

For it would mean that I was becoming like God, in that I was able to see beneath the surface, that I was developing the spiritual eye, the spiritual ear, to serve as interpreter of impressions made upon the physical eye, the physical ear. I have a friend who, when she is summing up the character of another, feels that she has bestowed her highest praise, when she says "She is not easily shocked." And if the not being easily shocked does not imply an absence of ideals, but rather a knowledge of, an understanding of human nature, an ability to see not only the deed but also the soul of the doer, then surely it is a quality deserving of praise. God is never shocked, for He understands all.

I once heard it said of a very sweet young girl, "It is easy for her to be so uniformly sweet, for she has nothing of the reformer in her nature." But that is not the kind of sweetness that we want, not the sweetness that is blind to sin, but the sweetness that sees sin clearly, and stays sweet just the same; the sweetness which understands, and knows that if there be condemnation, it should not be so much for the individual as for the whole order of society, that has made such sin possible. It may be permitted to Pippa to sing "All's right with the world," but Pippa was only a child. Browning, the author of "Fifine," the creator of Guido and his brothers, certainly never meant to teach that all was right with the world in the child's sense. Indeed, as we read his poems, there

are times when we are more inclined to say, "All's wrong with the world. Who will show us any good?" But it is true that deep beneath the wrong, Browning did find all right with the world. As a friend of mine said of a popular play, "Its lesson seems to be that while at present all is wrong with the world, there is beneath all that is wrong something that is right, and that will in the end make everything right." That is life's lesson.

"He that is spiritual judgeth all things," but "Judge not according to appearances, but judge righteous judgment." The mercy of the man who is ignorant of sin, or who wilfully denies its existence, is not real mercy. It is only because Browning, like his own David, had gone the whole round of creation, that his final judgment of human nature is worth anything. That judgment is to be found in the last lines which came from his pen, in which he describes himself as

"One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake."

We are sometimes told that we must not be too critical. I am inclined to think that it is impossible to be too critical, if only we can be critical in the right spirit. The criticism or

analysis of others can never hurt the soul that is conscious of its own weakness. For it is not criticism, but complacency that is the enemy of spiritual growth. We must not indulge in it, not so much because it hurts others, as because it hurts ourselves. It did not hurt the publican that the Pharisee prayed within himself, "Lord, I thank thee that I am not as other men are, unjust, adulterers, extortioners, or even as this publican," but it did hurt the Pharisee.

There are only two sins that Jesus condemned unsparingly, hypocrisy and avarice. And the hypocrisy which he condemned did not consist in pretending to others that one was better than one was. It was the much more hopeless sin of believing one's self that one was better than one was. And the sinner was almost always a correct person, a devotee of formal righteousness.

Of course the difficulty here, as elsewhere in life, is that if we escape Scylla, we are in danger of falling into Charybdis. Just as it is always harder for the tolerant person to tolerate intolerance than to tolerate any other sin, so it is harder for the merciful person to extend mercy to this unmerciful righteousness, this spiritual security, than to any other sin. And are we really called upon to do so? I said the other day that I despised a snob, and was told that it was never right to despise any one. And in truth I believe that it is not in my nature permanently to despise any one. But in setting up standards, in combating

sins that are not generally recognized as sins, fierce waves of contempt such as swept over Jesus Himself, when He pronounced His woes upon the self-satisfied people of His own day, do seem to me to be justifiable. There is no need to despise the type of person who is guilty of physical sin, such sin is clearly recognized as sin. Moreover it brings its own penalty. But it is the mission of this age, as it was the mission of Jesus' own age, to put snobbishness, hard superiority, in its proper place. And its proper place is at the very head of the category of possible sins.

Yet in judging the modern Pharisee, we must remember that even for his sin, society is more to blame than is the individual. For the erring individual has probably been brought up to be a self-righteous snob. Society which, through its bad tenement houses, exposes the poor and the low-born to physical temptations, through its false standards exposes the well-to-do and the well-born to this more subtle temptation. Thus, in the last analysis, even here it is society rather than the individual who is to be condemned, the sin rather than the sinner.

So I think that we can be sure that while, when we really understand, there will still be some sins that we will continue to condemn unsparingly, there will be no sinner whom we shall so condemn. But there can be no real understanding that is of the head alone, the heart must play its part. "The prophets," says Matthew Arnold, "ear-

nestly reminded their nation of the superiority of justice and judgment to any exterior ceremony like sacrifice. But judgment and justice themselves, as Israel in general conceived them, have something exterior in them; now what was wanted was more inwardness, more feeling. This was given by adding mercy and humbleness to judgment and justice. Mercy and humbleness are always something inward, they are affections of the heart." In one sense mercy is only justice — that is, it is head justice and heart justice, not just external justice.

Head justice and heart justice, that is what we want, the seeing eye, the understanding heart, justice that understands, justice that loves, for that is the only justice that is justice! In judging our fellowmen we must not leave our intellects behind us. Justice that is merely of the heart is not justice, but wishy-washy sentimentality. But, on the other hand, justice that is of the head alone is never real justice, for the head alone never understood a single human being, or a single important human interest. We must use both head and heart to evolve our ideals of right and wrong, we must use both head and heart to understand our fellowmen who may sin against these ideals.

Understanding, of course, does not always mean approving, nor does it necessarily mean that even when people do approve of each other, that they can always work together. An acquaintance of mine told me that when he was traveling in China

he heard of two missionaries who would have nothing to do with each other. His informant seemed to think that this proved conclusively that neither was a real Christian. His own impression was that the two men did not understand each other; if only they could be brought to do this, he felt that there should be no difficulty about their working together. But when he came to know them, he discovered that there was no lack of understanding, and even of respect, and yet each was convinced that the other's mode of work was wrong, that the other, although a good man, was mistaken. Hence of course there could be no working together. Probably it was even better that they should not meet often, but there was no lack of mercy.

And then of course sometimes we may recognize the fact that a man's way of working and living is right for him, but it is not our way. Hence although we may approve of him, we cannot work or live together. But the important thing is that a man should cast out devils, not that he should follow with us.

Yes, when we really understand our fellowmen, it is impossible for us not to be merciful. But how shall we attain unto this understanding? We attain unto it in great measure, at least, by understanding ourselves. Know thyself, not only because in order to develop the best self and to subdue the worst self, it is necessary to know the self, but also because it is through know-

ing ourselves that we come to know others.

For every man is included in every other man. Hence the way to understand another is to put ourselves in his place, to look into our own hearts, and to find in them the seed of evil which, under different circumstances, might have developed into the same outward action which we are condemning in another. Yes, and to look back over our own lives, and to see, alas! that there have been times in which seeds of evil not only might, but did develop into actions quite as bad as those which we are now condemning. And thus seeing clearly the beam in our own eye, we will be able to estimate more fairly the mote that is in our brother's eye. And as we know that even with the beam in our own eye, we have never been all bad, so we can be sure that, in spite of the mote that is in his eye, our brother, too, has his good qualities.

"Know thine own soul," not so much for the sake of knowing thine own soul, not as an end in itself, but for the sake of realizing the sameness, the unity, the brotherhood of all men. That is the reason that to the Greek the words "Know thyself" comprehended all virtue. For the purpose of life is that we may see, that the mind may see, that the heart may see, that both heart and mind may be open to receive light and love. So we must keep the mind and the heart open that we may understand ourselves, that we may understand other people.

What is the great mission of literature save to

combat prejudice? to broaden and deepen the heart by making it see what lies beneath the surface? But no poet, no novelist ever wrote anything worth writing, save as he wrote out of his own heart; hence the necessity of knowing one's own heart. And I think that there is a sense in which the really great novelist loves all his characters, and makes us love them all, because he understands them all, and makes us understand them all. To understand is to love, to love is to understand. Men speak of "the gentle Shakespeare." But why was he the gentle Shakespeare? Because he understood all varieties of the human heart and mind, as no other of the sons of men has understood them, and loved because he understood. This is true greatness. "Thy gentleness hath made thee great," but also "Thy greatness hath made thee gentle."

It follows as a matter of course that the merciful are blessed or happy, for the mere being merciful makes them happy. "The merciful man doeth good unto his own soul." Nothing makes us so unhappy as harsh and bitter judgments of others. The bitter person must always be the unhappy person. But the truly merciful man is not only he who has no harshness or bitterness, but he who, through a clear understanding, has come to see that there is no room for, no excuse for harshness or bitterness, for he has come to realize not only that there is always good beneath the evil, but also that even the evil itself is good

in the making. So even evil only serves to kindle the flame of his love. He cannot help being an optimist, not an unreasoning, but a reasoning optimist, and the reasoning optimist must always be happy.

And then, as I have said so many times in the course of this book, the only thing that can bring real, lasting happiness, is the feeling that we are moving onward in the direction of full development. What is God's mercy to us, save the inner peace that comes to us as we grow into more perfect harmony with man and God? And what is human perfection save perfect relations with man and God? And we are only merciful in the deep sense of the word as we come into closer, more perfect relations with both man and God, through coming into a fuller understanding of man who sins, and of God who forgives sin, and so forgive as God forgives. We pray "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Should we not also pray, "Help us to forgive those who trespass, whether against us or against any one else, even those who trespass against themselves, as Thou forgivest us, because we understand them as Thou understandest us and them"?

We sometimes say, "I can't care for so and so, because I see through him too well." The real truth is that we do not care for him, because we do not see through him enough. A little insight, like a little knowledge, is a dangerous thing. But

when we see through people as God sees through them, we will love everybody, even as God loves everybody. The true sage is he who, seeing deepest, loves most.

The reward of the merciful is the opening of the eyes, the happiness of seeing that, as the dying Luria says, all men do tend to become good creatures, even though it be so slow. As our hearts enlarge to their proper size, we come to see that as in Christ Jesus, there can be neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, so in us there can be no such thing.

And we are to carry mercy so far as to love our enemies. To be able to do that is the greatest reward, the highest happiness of all. For if love is the greatest bliss that the human heart can attain unto, surely the greatest bliss of all, the joy that transcends joy, is to carry love so far as to extend it to an enemy. "If ye love them that love you, what thank have ye?" No, the great reward is when we love those that do not love us, and this reward is love itself.

Is it not significant that hard upon the command to love our enemies, come the words "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect"? But what is it to be made perfect? To be made through and through. And we are made through and through only as we are filled through and through with love. We can only be made perfect, as we are made perfect in one,— that is, as we become one with God, and

one with our fellowmen. "Love is the fulfillment of the law," and when love extends even to the enemy, then and then only is the law perfectly fulfilled.

And it makes no difference whether we read this verse as a command, or, as in the Revised Version, as a promise.

VII

THE PEACEMAKERS

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God."

Who are the peacemakers? Are they just the people who patch up quarrels? If so, not many of us have the opportunity to earn this blessing, for there are few of us to whose lot it ever falls to perform this service. Moreover, when all is said and done, peace is not the absence of quarreling; comparatively few of us quarrel, and yet comparatively few of us have real peace. In the last analysis, peace consists not so much in our relations to each other, as in our relations to ourselves and to God. That is, to the general order of the universe, which is God's expression of Himself. Peace, like the kingdom of Heaven, is within us! And peacemakers are not so much those who patch up quarrels, as those who diffuse an atmosphere of peace, those who like Jesus say, or rather have no need to say, whenever they come into a company, "Peace be unto you," and when they leave, "My peace I leave with you."

What is this peace? Ruskin, at the beginning of his "Præterita," says, "For best and truest of all blessings, I had been taught the perfect mean-

ing of Peace in thought and word. I never had heard my father's or my mother's voice once raised in any question with each other; nor seen an angry or even a slightly hurt or offended glance, in the eye of either. I had never heard a servant scolded; nor even suddenly, passionately, or in any severe manner blamed. I had never seen a moment's trouble or disorder in any household matter, nor anything whatever done in a hurry, or undone in due time. I had no conception of such a thing as anxiety. . . . I had never done any wrong that I knew of, beyond occasionally delaying the commitment to heart of some improving sentence, that I might watch a wasp on the window pane, or a bird in the cherry tree; and I had never seen any grief."

Is this peace? Is it not rather the negation of life? And negation, resignation, is not peace, He who said, " Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you " was also He who said " I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." No, it is not less life, but more life that we want. Peace is not negative. Real peace can nowhere be found save in life, and life means love and suffering. And while it is sometimes important that we should relax emotionally, it is far more important that we shall have strong emotional natures to relax.

Ruskin tells us that the general tenor of his education was too formal. Was not this peace of his childhood also too formal? He not only

had no grief, he tells us that at this time he had nothing to love. But how can there be peace without grief and without love? No! if we are to have peace we must have the full peace, that comes to those who see life steadily, and see it whole, not the empty peace that comes to those who have no sorrows of their own, and whose eyes are blinded to the world's sorrows. If we are to have freedom from anxiety, it must not be the freedom that those have who have never had anything to be anxious about, or that they have who are too stupid to be anxious, but the peace that comes to those who have their share of natural anxieties, and are sufficiently clear-sighted to see through them, to feel the peace that is underneath them.

For real peace comes only to one who, like Jesus, has been a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Peace in the midst of agony, the calm wisdom gained by suffering of the Greeks, the crown of thorns transformed into a crown of glory of the Christian, this only is true peace. He only knows peace, who has come out of great tribulation, and has made his will one with the Divine will. Peace can only be obtained as the creature becomes one with the Creator.

"The rishis," says Tagore, "were they who having reached the supreme God from all sides had found abiding peace, had become united with all, had entered into the life of the universe." In

such union with the Creator man becomes perfect, made perfect through joy, made perfect through suffering. He who has attained this peace is more even than a child of God, he is one with God. "I and the Father are one, we will be one with you, ye shall be one with us." The purpose of creation is completed, for what is that purpose save that the creature shall become one with the Creator, thinking His thoughts, understanding His laws, doing His will? For such a man suffering has ended, he has passed "under the ultimate angels' law" where

"Law, Life, Joy, Impulse are one thing."

But this is a never-ending process, and the strongest argument for Eternity is that it is so short a time to understand the Eternal, to become one with God.

Those of us who have ever suffered from, or been with one who has suffered from melancholia, and recovered, know what this means. It sometimes seems as though nothing could shake them again. For they have been to the bottom of all things, into the very depths of hell, and there they have found God, and found themselves. "If I descend into hell, lo, thou art there," and so there is no hell. Hell has become simply the way to heaven, the fiery path by which we ascend into the presence of God. Henceforth although the waves may be mountain high, we know that at the

bottom there will always be peace. There is no longer any fear of the future, for the soul knows its own strength.

"The Future I may face, now I have proved the Past."

Is not this the message of the book of Job, the book which Carlyle has so well called "Every Man's Book"? Great suffering comes to a righteous man, and through that suffering his righteousness, nay more, he himself ceases to be formal and becomes real, for through it he obtains a vision of God, the great Reality. His three friends come to him with the sorry comfort that his sufferings are the punishment of his sins, repentance is what he needs. Elihu comes nearer the truth when he asserts that suffering is discipline, the παθήματα of life are μαθήματα. But the real solution comes when God Himself answers Job out of the whirlwind, giving no intellectual solution of the problem of suffering, but creating in him such a full sense of His presence, that no further solution is necessary. That is what suffering is for, to bring us into the presence of God. Then the heart and mind of man are satisfied. "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth Thee."

What is it to see God? Is it not to see, realize and be satisfied with the fact that we are at the same time everything and nothing? In ourselves nothing, as a part of God everything! And to

this vision of God we only come through suffering nobly borne. This is affliction's meaning, this is its compensation!

But the Vision which is Peace does not come to us through renunciation. Indeed, so long as renunciation is conscious, we should be ashamed of it, not proud of it. "In the last analysis," said the most unselfish person that I know, "I always do the things that I like best to do." "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God," because Thy will is my will. "I do always the things that please Him" because the things that please Him are the things that please Me. "To obey is better than sacrifice," but not much better, because after all obedience has in it something of the nature of sacrifice. Glad co-operation is better than either, "Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends."

For being one with the Father means not just simply submitting to the will of the Father, but actively doing it up to the best light that we have. We must not be resigned to the will of God, we must actively work for it, we must do our best to bring it about. For we do not want the peace that is a mere mental and moral chloroform, stifling ambition, deadening hope. To abandon interest in life is not peace. Human nature demands interest more than it demands anything else, and without the thing that we demand most, there can be no peace. The negation of ambition is not peace.

"I have learned in whatsoever state I am there-

with to be content," but content with it as a stage, discontented with it as a finality. For peace can be found only in growth; it lies not in resignation, but in hope. It comes only to those who have a definite plan for their lives, a definite object for which they are working up to the limit of their ability. It lies not in quiescence, but in struggle; we find rest only in effort. Baffled in trying to attain one object, we must go on to another; when one door is closed to us, we must find another that is open. We "fall to rise, are baffled to fight better, sleep to wake."

Of course there must be a certain kind not of resignation, but of acceptance. We must accept our own limitations, accept ourselves as we are. We must not say, "If I were different, I could do differently," but we must find out what we are, accept ourselves for what we are. We must accept even the limitations that we have imposed upon ourselves, the limitations of mind and body caused by our mistakes and sins. Instead of wasting our strength in remorse, trying to repair the irreparable, we must accept what is left, do the best that we can with what we still have. Nor must we accept ourselves as less than we are, we must respect ourselves, for in the absence of self-respect there can be no peace. Moreover, he who despises himself soon becomes despicable.

And we must sometimes accept the hardest thing of all to accept, the misunderstanding of friends. Thus only can we enter into the fellow-

ship of His sufferings. For it was not the accursed death of the cross that made Him the Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with grief. It was the fact that not even His brethren believed on Him, that "He came unto His own, and they that were His own, received Him not."

And we must, of course, accept sorrow and suffering, sorrow and suffering that seem to us unnecessary, not only for ourselves, but for the world. Yet most of this, I think, we are to accept only as a stage, only until we can find out how to avoid it. For instance, it is the conventional thing to say that it is God's will when a friend or comrade is stricken by death, and thence to draw comfort. But I cannot be brought to the place where I can believe that it is God's will, that a man or a woman should be cut off in the height of power and service. My comfort is that it is not God's will, and that the time is coming when men shall so discover and live by God's laws that an early death cannot occur, and then, and not now, God's will will be done.

If we ask why we were not told the laws of God from the beginning, why so many centuries of waste must be lived through in the process of finding them out, the answer is that in that case there would be no opportunity to serve God with all the mind; that is, that all opportunity of intellectual and spiritual growth would be denied us. For while obedience may be moral, it is certainly not spiritual. There is no spiritual growth even in

the acceptance of the experience of others; it is only as we find out things for ourselves that the spirit grows. Therefore, it is that the work of man's life is quite as much to discover the laws of God, as it is to obey them. God establishes His laws, inviolable and beneficial, gives to man the power to discover them, and then leaves him free even to ignorance and sin and suffering.

"Henceforth I call you not servants, but friends." To serve God with the mind is to become the friend of God, for what is the friend save the one who understands us, who enters into our plans and our purposes? "Ye are they who have continued with me in my temptations." That is much, but they who are with us in our plans and ambitions, are even more. Men's dearest friends are commonly their fellow-workers, it is permitted to us to be workers together with God. For God cannot fulfil Himself, cannot carry out His own laws, except as we understand Him. If the greatest suffering of man is to be misunderstood, so to Him also! Speaking after the manner of men, let us learn His laws, that we may put an end to His suffering! "The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together in pain" until the creature understands the Creator. Till then, both creature and Creator must suffer. For we are not only here to fill out that which is lacking in the sufferings of Christ, we are here to fill out that which is lacking in the wisdom of God.

If only we could be sure of the Future! Then

it seems as though we could bear anything. But we must be content, not resigned, not to know all about the Future now, though always working to find out more. For if we knew all about the life that is to be, the life that now is might be only one of waiting. How much time is wasted in waiting for trains, for meals, for mails! So we might waste the whole life in waiting. And the attitude of waiting is not an attitude of growth.

For we were made to live mainly in the Present, — not too much in either the past or the future. To live in the past is to stand still or to go backward, to live in the future in the sense of merely waiting for the future, is to cut off the possibility of having a future. It is legitimate to live in the past only as its joys and its sorrows, its victories and its defeats, shed light upon the present. The life of yesterday is useful only as it contributes strength, sweetness and light to the life of to-day. And it is legitimate to live in the future only as we are making the future out of the present, not as we are worrying about it, or waiting for it. And just as we make the future of this life out of the present, so it is probable that we make the life that is beyond out of the life that now is.

> "The higher life we cannot miss,
> By truly, nobly living this."

I have a dear friend who, in the ninety years that have been allotted her, has done much to make this world a better place in which to live.

An old gentleman, a contemporary whose life has been spent in fighting the same battles that she has fought, once said to her, "And now my friend and I feel that our work is done, and we have nothing to do but wait for the angels to call us home." To which the old lady replied in a spirited way, "You may wait for the angels if you want to, I shall be ready for them when they come, but I have too much to do to wait for them." And for myself, I can only hope that old age will find me so full of interest in life that I shall have no time to wait for the angels. For then as the outward man decays, the inward man will be renewed day by day. Moreover when the inward man is constantly being renewed, it generally takes the outward man a long time to decay.

Yes, it is in work that we find life and peace. That is the reason that no honest work is ever a failure. "I have no more made my Book," says Montaigne, "than my Book has made me." That is the chief use of work, not what we accomplish outside of us, but what we accomplish inside of us. The world could get on very well without my work, but I could not get on well without it.

True, "they also serve who only stand and wait." But only when such standing and waiting is imperative. And when we are actually physically or mentally incapacitated for work, I do not think that the suffering is great. It is only the unnecessary rest that produces restlessness. It is when one feels in one's self the capacity to work,

and yet for some reason, generally some misunderstanding, or some social convention, is cut off from exercising it, that the suffering is greatest of all.

Think of the maiden aunts of the past generation who sat by the fireside of a sister or a brother! In many cases no one wanted them to be there, and they did not want to be there, but there was no other place for them to be. Some of these women had been in their youth quite as attractive as their married sisters, quite as able as their successful brothers, but the chances of life had denied them the lot of their sisters, social conventions had denied them the career of their brothers. So with no outlet for either emotional nature or ability, they became a burden to themselves and to everybody else.

This is the greatest suffering that I can conceive of. Compared with such women, St. Paul did not know the alphabet of suffering! Well might he speak of his afflictions as light and but for a moment! For if he was "in prisons more abundantly, and in stripes above measure," he was also in labors more abundantly, in labors above measure! He was working up to the very highest point of his ability, for a cause that he was sure was worth while! And he had the glorious fellowship of the Apostles! Therefore, of course, the perils of divers, the perils of robbers, the perils from his countrymen, the perils from the Gentiles, were to him as nothing. But the old maid's tragedy, now happily becoming

a thing of the past, was lack of work, lack of fellowship. Generations of old maids had to groan and travail together in pain, waiting to come into the heritage of this generation. God grant that these sad generations, who in this world had only evil things are now comforted. Yes, there is a sense in which in the next world they should be put even above the best of mothers, for the mothers had some of their good things in this life.

For in such cases the great comfort that comes to me is in the thought of the justice of God. If God is the Creator, He owes us happiness. False theologies have sometimes told us that He owes us nothing, but the Father owes His child everything. And God is far more responsible for us than the earthly parent is for his child. For the earthly parent is not always responsible for his child's limitations, but in the last analysis the Creator is always responsible for our limitations. To say that God is not bound by His own laws, that what is justice for man is not justice for God, is to me too much like the Greek and Roman ideal which permitted murder and adultery to their gods. Worse, for these sins are in a sense private crimes, affecting, except by example, only a few individuals. Injustice on the part of a king is worse than private vice. A good man but a bad king does more harm than a bad man but a good king. God must be at least as high as the highest ideals that He has implanted in the best

men. In no civilized country should a king be *solutus a legibus*.

The twin sister of work is prayer. Work and prayer are the two angels that comfort us and bring us peace. Why do we pray? Our Father knoweth the things we have need of before we ask Him. We pray then not so much that we may obtain the things for which we pray, as that we may be renewed and strengthened in the inner man, that fellowship with the Infinite may protect us from the agitation and embitterment brought on by contact with the finite.

When Jesus prayed I do not believe that He was asking for things at all. He was just resting Himself upon His Father's love, feeling that His Father was there. That is what prayer is, feeling our Father's presence, for with His presence comes His peace, the peace of God that passeth all understanding. We are taught to ask for things in early youth, because we are so childish that we cannot approach the Infinite in any other way, but as our spirits develop, a fuller, better communion becomes possible. Then we cease to ask for anything except spiritual blessings. Prayer consists in so uniting ourselves with the source of all strength that we become one with the Infinite.

But not only does this kind of prayer strengthen and steady the inner man, it renews the ideal. For prayer expressed in words is something like saying our lessons. The child says his les-

sons, not for the teacher's benefit, but that he may clarify his own mind. We do not fully know or understand a thing until we can put it into words. So through prayer we come to know and understand our own ideals, clarify and strengthen our own notion of the purpose of our lives, and our desire to fulfil it.

VIII

THE PURE IN HEART

"BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD!"

HEREIN *is the sum of the whole matter.* "*Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!*" *Of course the pure in heart shall see God, for who are the pure in heart? The pure in heart are they who do see God, in all the works, and all the laws of Creation, they who see the Creator in everything that He has created, they who never call anything that God has cleansed common or unclean, they who never make anything that God has cleansed common or unclean.*

It is this ability to be pure in heart, this ability to see God, that separates man from the lower animals. The horse and the dog see the creation — only man sees the Creator. Man, and man only, has the power to recognize the fact that his body is a temple of the living God, and that his spirit is a breath of the living God. The Spirit beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God! Only man is capable of enthusiasm, for only man has been breathed into by the living God!

What is the living God? Here I cannot get beyond the definition that I learned in my childhood. God is Love, God is Light, God is Spirit, He is the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and the Fear of the Lord! And this Spirit the pure in heart always see, for in It they live and move and have their Being!

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